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SACRAMENTAL

ADDRESSES AND MEDITATIONS.

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SACRAMENTAL
ADDRESSES AND MEDITATIONS.

BY THE LATE

HENRY BELFRAGE, D.D.,
" FALKIRK.

EIGHTH EDITION, COMPLETE IN ONE VOLUME.

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ROBERT CARTER AND BROTHERS,
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P R E F A C E.

AMONG the various books on religious subjects, which attest the zeal of good men for the spiritual improvement of their fellow-creatures, few have appeared directly adapted to guide the meditations of Christians in the observance of the Lord's Supper. It will be readily admitted that a publication was not unnecessary, which should be so framed as to excite devotional feeling at the altar of God, and to direct its movements to moral obedience. How far the present work answers this description, I do not presume to say.

A wish has often been expressed by serious persons, to have it in their power to peruse in the closet, some of those Addresses to which they have listened with interest during the solemnities of religion; and they have stated their hope, that thus those too fleeting impressions might be recalled, with which their hearts have swelled, while they thought of the loving-kindness of God in the midst of His temple. To stir up the pure minds of the pious by way of remembrance, and to be a helper of their joy, were the objects of the labours of Him, whom all ministers should glory to imitate.

The reader of this volume must not expect long or methodical illustrations of the texts on which the Addresses are founded.

This would by no means have suited the object of the work. Such of the ideas suggested by the texts have been selected, as applied most directly and forcibly to the objects exhibited in this ordinance; and their practical tendency and design have been faithfully stated.

Some may be disposed to censure the abrupt transitions, and the frequent expressions of devotional feeling, which occur in these Addresses; but however inconsistent these may be with the closeness and precision expected in a didactic discourse, they were, in some measure, required by the very nature and design of this work. In seasons of strong emotion, the manner in which we address men must correspond with the movements of the heart; and the language which we employ should be that of nature and feeling.

I trust, that there is nothing in this volume that can be justly charged with extravagance and enthusiasm, or with debasing the workings of religion, by the epithets or the flights of passion. The devotional language of Scripture has been my guide. Passages of Scripture, when selected with judgment, and applied with propriety, form the principal charm of religious composition. They possess a dignity, a gravity, and a melting tenderness, peculiarly their own. The care that has been taken to point out the moral influence of every topic to which I have called the attention, will show, that the fervour which I wished to excite, is that which is zealous in good works, not that which passes away in boastful professions, and in idle transport.

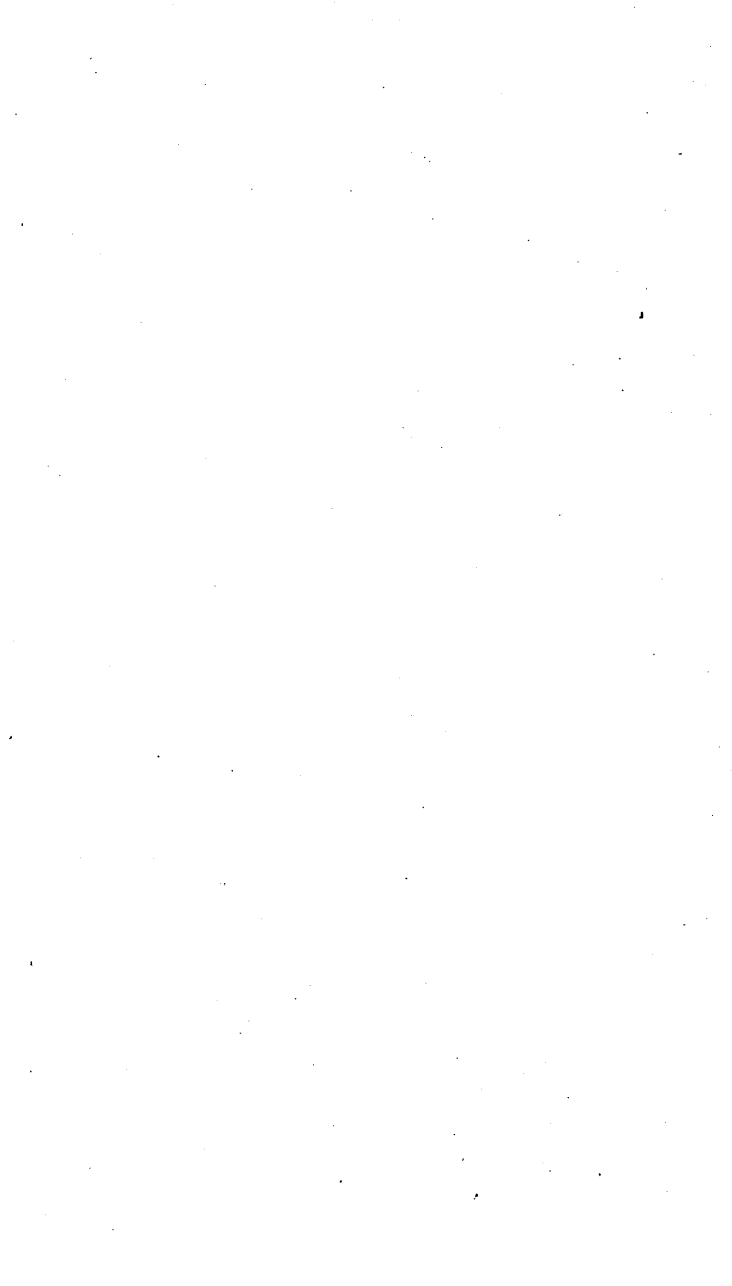
I have endeavoured to give all the variety in my power to these Addresses. If there should be an occasional recurrence of the same sentiments or expressions, they will not condemn

this, who consider, that many of them were written at intervals of time very distant from each other ; and that in such a number of discourses, bearing directly, as their object demanded, on one great topic, a partial coincidence could not, in every case, be avoided.

A few of the Addresses have been enlarged, as it appeared to me that Christians, when perusing them in their closets, might wish that some of the topics were pursued further.

It would be foolish to expect that a book of this description would suit the taste of the various classes of the professors of religion. My only hope is, that they will read it with some advantage, who wish to love their Redeemer more fervently, and to have their hearts made better. Should its reception be unfavourable, I have this consolation, that it was intended to advance the best interests and the true happiness of the good. It is my highest and most ardent desire, that it may obtain the gracious approbation of Him whose friendship is the sweetest felicity of the heart, and in whose cross alone it is my wish to glory for ever.

HENRY BELFRAGE.



ADVERTISEMENT TO THE SIXTH EDITION.

THE valuable Sacramental Addresses by the late Dr Belfrage having been for some years entirely out of print, and being still frequently inquired for, the Publishers are happy, with the sanction of the Author's family, to issue a new edition, in which the hundred Addresses originally published in two volumes, have been arranged in the order of their Scripture mottoes, and included in one volume. It may be proper, for the information of readers in England and elsewhere, who may not be aware of the mode in which the Lord's Supper, for which these Addresses were prepared, is usually dispensed in Scotland, to give a brief description of the forms observed. After various preliminary services, the communicants take their places in successive companies at tables specially appropriated for them, when the authority for the observance of the solemn rite is first read, and the consecration prayer offered up. The officiating minister then delivers a short address, founded on some appropriate passage of Scripture, distributes the sacramental elements to the communicants, and concludes with a few words of suitable exhortation, frequently founded upon, or in connection with, the previous address. A second company then takes the place of the former, who are in turn

similarly addressed; and they again are succeeded by others, till all the communicants have participated. Though the Addresses contained in this volume were composed for such occasions, and will be found richly suggestive to ministers in their preparations for the dispensation of the Communion, they are also admirably adapted, by their highly practical and devotional feeling, to direct and animate the minds of private Christians in their retirement. If a portion of these Addresses be perused in the closet either before or after communion, they must, by the blessing of God, contribute not a little to enkindle that devotion and increase that solemnity, wherewith it becomes the Christian to encompass the altar of God. The Publishers would only add, in conclusion, the opinion expressed by the late Professor Balmer of Berwick: — ‘These Addresses are characterized by extraordinary variety and richness, and what was hardly to be expected in combination with these qualities, by great appropriateness. If the expressions may be allowed, they are redolent with love and salvation; they breathe the atmosphere of the Redeemer’s atoning “sufferings, and of the glory that followed,” and are tinged at once with the “blood of His cross and the radiance of Heaven.”’

EDINBURGH, *May* 1860.

CONTENTS.

	Page
I. THE FIRST PROMISE. GENESIS III. 15,	1
II. GOD'S PROVIDING A LAMB FOR A BURNT-OFFERING. GENESIS XXII. 8,	3
III. THE DIVINE PRESENCE AND PROTECTION PROMISED. GENESIS XXVIII. 15,	7
IV. THE GOD OF BETHEL. GENESIS XXXI. 13,	10
V. THE CAPTAIN OF THE LORD'S HOST APPEARING TO JOSHUA. JOSHUA V. 13, 14,	14
VI. RUTH'S CHOICE. RUTH I. 16, 17,	17
VII. DAVID'S LAMENTATION OVER JONATHAN. 2 SAMUEL I. 26,	23
VIII. DAVID'S LAMENTATION OVER THE DEATH OF ABSALOM. 2 SAMUEL XVIII. 33,	28
IX. JOB'S FAITH IN A LIVING REDEEMER. JOB XIX. 25,	31
X. COMMUNION WITH GOD SOLICITED. PSALM IV. 6,	34
XI. THE SEVERITY OF CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS. PSALM XXII. 14,	37
XII. CHRIST'S ENGAGING TO BE A SACRIFICE FOR US. PSALM XL. 6-8,	40
XIII. THE REDEMPTION OF THE SOUL PRECIOUS. PSALM XLIX. 8,	44
XIV. THE HARMONY OF MERCY AND JUSTICE IN OUR RE- DEMPTION. PSALM LXXXV. 10,	47

	Page
XV. JEHOVAH'S THOUGHTS DEAR TO HIS PEOPLE. PSALM CXXXIX. 17, 18,	53
XVI. THE LOVE OF CHRIST PREFERRED TO THE BEST EARTHLY COMFORTS. SONG I. 4,	56
XVII. COMMUNION WITH JESUS OBTAINED. SONG III. 4,	61
XVIII. GLORY TO THE RIGHTEOUS. ISAIAH XXIV. 16,	65
XIX. CHRIST OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. ISAIAH XLV. 24,	69
XX. THE GRAND REMEDY FOR MAN'S APOSTASY. ISAIAH LIII. 6,	73
XXI. JESUS REJOICING IN THE FRUIT OF HIS SUFFERINGS. ISAIAH LIII. 11,	76
XXII. THE SORROWS OF CHRIST WITHOUT A PARALLEL. LAMENTATIONS I. 12,	81
XXIII. THE PLANT OF RENOWN. EZEKIEL XXXIV. 29,	85
XXIV. THE PRINCE'S PRESENCE WITH HIS CHURCH. EZEKIEL XLVI. 10,	90
XXV. THE PRISONERS DELIVERED FROM THE HORRIBLE PIT. ZECHARIAH IX. 11,	95
XXVI. HOW GREAT IS HIS GOODNESS! ZECHARIAH IX. 17,	98
XXVII. HOW GREAT IS HIS BEAUTY! ZECHARIAH IX. 17,	102
XXVIII. CHRIST WOUNDED IN THE HOUSE OF HIS FRIENDS. ZECHARIAH XIII. 6,	105
XXIX. JESUS ENCOURAGING THE TREMBLING SOUL. MAT- THEW XIV. 27,	110
XXX. THE WEDDING GARMENT. MATTHEW XXII. 11-13,	113
XXXI. THE INSCRIPTION ON THE CROSS. MATTHEW XXVII. 37,	117
XXXII. THE DESERTION OF CHRIST. MATTHEW XXVII. 46,	123
XXXIII. THE VAIL OF THE TEMPLE RENT IN TWAIN. MATTHEW XXVII. 51,	125
XXXIV. THE EARTHQUAKE AT CHRIST'S DEATH. MATTHEW XXVII. 51,	129

	Page
XXXV. THE RESURRECTION AT THE DEATH OF JESUS. MATTHEW XXVII. 52, 53, . . .	133
XXXVI. THE SEEKING OF CHRIST ENCOURAGED. MAT- THEW XXVIII. 5, . . .	138
XXXVII. THE CENTURION'S TESTIMONY. MARK XV. 39, . . .	143
XXXVIII. THE BIRTH OF CHRIST. LUKE II. 7, . . .	149
XXXIX. THE BIRTH OF CHRIST IMPROVED. LUKE II. 10, 11, . . .	152
XL. THE MINISTRY OF OUR LORD. LUKE IV. 18, 19, . . .	154
XLI. THE DEATH OF CHRIST WORTHY OF ALL HONOUR. LUKE IX. 30, 31, . . .	159
XLII. THE EAGERNESS OF JESUS TO SUFFER FOR MAN. LUKE XII. 50, . . .	162
XLIII. OUR IMMENSE OBLIGATIONS TO OUR LORD. LUKE XVI. 5, . . .	165
XLIV. JESUS PREDICTING HIS SUFFERINGS. LUKE XVIII. 31-34, . . .	169
XLV. CHRIST'S WEeping OVER JERUSALEM. LUKE XIX. 41, 42, . . .	172
XLVI. FIDELITY TO THE SAVIOUR REWARDED. LUKE XXII. 28-30, . . .	178
XLVII. CHRIST'S PRAYER FOR HIS MURDERERS. LUKE XXIII. 34, . . .	181
XLVIII. THE REQUESTS OF THE MALEFACTORS WHO WERE CRUCIFIED WITH OUR LORD. LUKE XXIII. 39-42, . . .	187
XLIX. THE DARKNESS AT THE DEATH OF CHRIST. LUKE XXIII. 44, 45, . . .	191
L. CHRIST'S LAST PRAYER. LUKE XXIII. 46, . . .	194
LI. THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD. LUKE XXIV. 50, 51, . . .	199
LII. CHRIST'S INTERVIEW WITH NATHANAEL. JOHN I. 47-51, . . .	204

	Page
LIII. CHRIST'S ADMONITION TO THOSE WHOM HE HAS HEALED. JOHN V. 14,	208
LIV. THE BREAD OF LIFE. JOHN VI. 34,	212
LV. EATING CHRIST'S FLESH, AND DRINKING HIS BLOOD. JOHN VI. 56,	217
LVI. THE WATER OF LIFE. JOHN VII. 37,	219
LVII. THE EXCELLENCIES OF JESUS AS A TEACHER. JOHN VII. 46,	225
LVIII. FAITH EXAMINED. JOHN IX. 35,	229
LIX. THE END OF CHRIST'S COMING. JOHN X. 10,	233
LX. THE FATHER'S COMPLACENCY IN THE SAVIOUR'S WORK. JOHN X. 17,	238
LXI. CHRIST'S WEEPING AT THE GRAVE OF LAZARUS. JOHN XI. 35,	241
LXII. MARY'S ANOINTING OF OUR LORD. JOHN XII. 3,	246
LXIII. CHRIST'S WASHING THE FEET OF THE DISCIPLES. JOHN XIII. 4, 5,	250
LXIV. JESUS GLORIFIED IN HIS SUFFERINGS. JOHN XIII. 31,	252
LXV. CHRIST'S LEGACY OF PEACE. JOHN XIV. 27,	255
LXVI. GOD GLORIFIED IN THE MEDIATOR'S DEATH. JOHN XVII. 4,	260
LXVII. CHRIST'S KINGLY GLORY RIDICULED. JOHN XIX. 5,	263
LXVIII. THE PLACE OF OUR LORD'S CRUCIFIXION. JOHN XIX. 17, 18,	267
LXIX. THE DIVIDING OF OUR LORD'S GARMENTS. JOHN XIX. 23, 24,	271
LXX. CHRIST'S CARE OF HIS MOTHER WHEN HE WAS SUFFERING. JOHN XIX. 26, 27,	275
LXXI. THE THIRST OF JESUS ON THE CROSS. JOHN XIX. 28, 29,	281
LXXII. OUR LORD'S DYING SHOUT, IT IS FINISHED. JOHN XIX. 30,	286

	Page
LXXIII. CHRIST'S SIDE PIERCED. JOHN XIX. 34, .	292
LXXIV. THE VISIT OF PETER AND JOHN TO THE GRAVE OF JESUS. JOHN XX. 3-8, . . .	296
LXXV. MARY'S PRIVILEGE AT THE SEPULCHRE. JOHN XX. 11-17, . . .	299
LXXVI. THE WONDERS WHICH MAY BE SEEN IN CHRIST'S HANDS AND SIDE. JOHN XX. 27, . . .	302
LXXVII. CHRIST'S THIRD QUESTION TO PETER. JOHN XXI. 17, . . .	305
LXXVIII. THE EVIDENCES OF COMMUNION. ACTS IV. 13,	311
LXXIX. REPENTANCE GRANTED TO THE GENTILES. ACTS XI. 18, . . .	316
LXXX. GOD'S LOVE COMMENDED. ROMANS V. 7, 8,	321
LXXXI. GRACE ABOUNDING ABOVE SIN. ROMANS V. 20,	327
LXXXII. CHRIST'S INTERCESSION. ROMANS VIII. 34,	330
LXXXIII. SHOWING THE LORD'S DEATH. 1 COR. XI. 26,	335
LXXXIV. THE APOSTOLIC BENEDICTION. 2 CORINTHIANS XIII. 14, . . .	340
LXXXV. THE WONDERS OF CHRIST'S LOVE. EPHE- SIANS III. 18, 19, . . .	344
LXXXVI. LIVING TO CHRIST. PHILIPPIANS I. 21,	348
LXXXVII. THE EXALTATION OF CHRIST. PHILIPPIANS II. 9, . . .	352
LXXXVIII. THE POWER OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION. PHILIPPIANS III. 10, . . .	355
LXXXIX. CHRIST A DELIVERER FROM THE WRATH TO COME. 1 THESSALONIANS I. 10, . . .	359
XC. CHRIST'S DYING THAT WE MIGHT LIVE WITH HIM. 1 THESSALONIANS V. 10, . . .	363
XCI. THE SYMPATHY OF OUR HIGH PRIEST. HE- BREWS IV. 15, . . .	367
XCII. CHRIST'S EXERCISE IN HIS AGONY. HEBREWS V. 7, . . .	370

	Page
XCIII. THE CONSOLATION OF THOSE WHO HAVE FLED TO CHRIST. HEBREWS VI. 17, 18, . . .	376
XCIV. COMING TO THE MEDIATOR OF THE NEW COVENANT. HEBREWS XII. 24, . . .	379
XCV. LOVE TO AN UNSEEN SAVIOUR. 1 PETER I. 8,	383
XCVI. REJOICING IN CHRIST. 1 PETER I. 8, .	388
XCVII. THE VALUE OF THE PROMISES. 2 PETER I. 4,	394
XCVIII. THE WONDERS OF ADOPTING LOVE. 1 JOHN III. 1,	398
XCIX. THE OVERCOMER'S FELICITY. REVELATION II. 17,	403
C. THE TRIUMPH OF THE REDEEMED. REVELATION VII. 9, 10, . . .	407

SACRAMENTAL ADDRESSES

AND

MEDITATIONS.

ADDRESS I.

I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed ; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel.

GENESIS iii. 15.

BEFORE THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE ELEMENTS.

CHRISTIANS, you are now assembled to commemorate the fulfilment of this ancient promise, and the achievement of this mighty victory. The ignorant and the profane have classed it with the dark sayings by which the crafty sport with the curiosity of their fellow-creatures ; but we behold God performing the mercy promised to the fathers, and remembering this early pledge of salvation. No lapse of time could efface it from His remembrance, and no event could make Him change His purpose. Satan, from the long period which had elapsed, and from the ease with which he had baffled the most formidable opponents of his power, might imagine that he had no discomfiture to dread, and that Jesus of Nazareth should be another victim to his fury ; but behold how He treads him in His anger, and tramples him in His fury. The victory was delayed that it might be more decisive, and the struggle was protracted, that the graces of the Messiah might be more fully displayed, and that the power of the adversary might be utterly destroyed. In no period of the ancient dispensation was the hope of the Saviour's appearance lost. It was cherished and strengthened by succeeding predictions from age to age ; and

the pious beheld it typified in their various sacrifices; and in those splendid victories, in which the carnal saw nothing but the valour of their warriors, and the glory of their country, they beheld preludes of the manifestation of the Son of God to destroy the works of the devil.

Ye are not called like them to hope for His coming, or to anticipate Satan's defeat. 'The voice of rejoicing and salvation is now in the tabernacles of the righteous,' for the right hand of the Lord hath done valiantly, and through the death which you now commemorate, hath vanquished and spoiled the prince of this world and all his hosts. And 'Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in His apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.'

While you contemplate this appearance, and listen to this answer, let this be your language, 'we will keep Thy word, we will trust in Thy power, and we will follow Thy standard.' You behold His heel bruised, and remembering that He was wounded in fighting your battles, and bruised as the chastisement of your peace, you will regard His sufferings with melting interest; and I beseech you to yield to Him the admiration, gratitude, and love, which His generous and triumphant exertions for you demand.

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE ELEMENTS.

'I will praise Thee, O Lord, with my whole heart, I will shew forth all Thy marvellous works.' Such is the assurance you have now given Him, and let no worldly perplexity or engagement ever induce you to forget it. Shew yourselves His genuine disciples by a determined opposition to error and vice, even when they appear in the most plausible forms, and are supported by men of note in the world. You can see nought in them, even when most artfully disguised, but what dishonours God, and ruins the soul. They may call your scruples and objections antiquated prejudices; but the specious title of modern liberality is often employed as a cover for what is impious in opinion, and licentious in morals. How truly honourable is it to be associated with the few who have not defiled their garments, and who shall walk with Christ in white, for they are counted by Him worthy!

Cultivate the graces by which you will contend with success against your spiritual enemies. Faith will shew you the Saviour ready to help you in the hour of need; love will make you abhor everything that is offensive to Him; patience will incline

you to suffer to any degree, and for any period, rather than yield; meekness will enable you to repress those angry and vindictive feelings, which so often hurry men into crimes; fear will teach you to walk circumspectly; temperance will dispose you to resist all the enticements of sinners; and hope will encourage you in all your difficulties by the expectations which it inspires of their happy termination.

Be careful to aid the tempted. By a single hint you may confirm in integrity the man who is tempted to fraud or falsehood; strengthen the sober purpose of him who is solicited to intemperance; cheer the heart that is drooping in despondence, and liberate those who are oppressed by the devil. These are valuable offices of Christian charity; and by the communion of this day, you have given a new pledge that you will perform them. 'They helped every man his neighbour, and every man said to his brother, be of good courage.' Now God has prepared your table in the presence of your enemies, they have been eyeing you with envy, and will seek for a fit opportunity of annoying you. Watch therefore, and pray that you enter not into temptation. Soon shall you reach that scene of peace where they shall molest you no more, and where you shall celebrate the Saviour's victories in a paradise into which the serpent can never enter, and where sin and sorrow are never known. 'To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which grows in the midst of the paradise of God.'

ADDRESS II.

My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt-offering.

GENESIS xxii. 8.

THESE words of Abraham strongly express his hope of the happy termination of his present trial, and that confidence in the mercy of heaven, which remained unshaken amidst all the apprehensions and struggles of nature. But as Abraham saw Christ's day afar off, we may consider this language as intimating also his expectation of the appearance of Him who should arise 'in the end of the world, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.'

'Without the shedding of blood there could be no remission.' A victim was demanded, that on it justice might execute the vengeance written, and that the guilt of mortals might be expiated in its blood. This sacrifice man could not provide.

The domains of kings could not furnish it, nor the wisdom of the schools say where it was to be found. 'Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof for a sin-offering.' In surveying the heathen world, we behold in every nation deities worshipped by sacrifices; but while these prove the universal conviction of human guilt, and of the necessity of an atonement for it, reason is conscious that they are vain oblations. Such has too often been the nature of these offerings, that the heart shrinks from the view of them in pity and in horror. On such altars hope could not rest. The angels of heaven could not provide this sacrifice, and whatever their zeal for God, or their pity for man, might suggest, they were conscious that the obedience required, it was not in their power to give; and that the sufferings demanded, they were unable to endure. And must man perish, because there is none to save? All around is silence. It is the silence of despair.

But what voice is this which breaks the awful silence? It cries, 'Deliver from going down to the pit, for I have found a ransom.' It is His voice who provided what none else could provide,—a sufficient atonement for human guilt, and a pitying Saviour for human wretchedness. How astonishing is this, that He who was offended should provide the peace-offering! And what is it that He leads to the altar? It is a Lamb without spot or blemish. 'He makes Him who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.' Avenging justice grasps its flaming sword, and directs it to the heart of man's generous substitute; and as it descends, no voice from above cries, Stay now thine hand; nor does its victim solicit either release or delay. 'He spares not His own Son, but delivers Him up for us all.' The heavenly hosts beheld this scene with astonishment, and exclaimed, as they saw the delight of the Father expiring under His hands, 'How unsearchable are His judgments!'

Behold Him, Christians, 'wounded for your transgressions, and bruised for your iniquities;' wounded till life expires, and bruised till His heart is broken. Your sins were in the load which crushed that heart, and had it not been that the punishment which they deserved was borne by Him, they would have made you miserable for ever.

Christians, contemplate the victim that dies for you! See with what generous love, and with what patience of hope, He suffers for sin! What are the qualities which the conduct of the sufferer most strikingly expresses? Are they not submission to God, and pity for man? His heart at last triumphs after being so long saddened by sorrow; while joy exulting in

the perfection of His sacrifice, and faith anticipating its acceptance, brighten His countenance for a moment, and then leave it to the paleness of death. And now, when the memorials of this sacrifice, the evidences of its acceptance, and the seals of your interest in it, are put into your hands, the exercise of your hearts will, I trust, correspond with this language of the Apostle, 'We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.'

Many were the questions which were often and anxiously asked by the thoughtful mind, respecting the mode in which the offended Deity might be approached with acceptance. The agonizing sinner was willing to sacrifice his rams by thousands, and to pour forth his oil in streams, nay, to give the child of his hopes for the sin of the soul. 'But He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good.' In Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, you see this good, your chief good. Instead of asking from you rivers of oil, He gives you the water of life, and the wine of the kingdom; and instead of demanding your first-born, 'He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him might not perish, but have everlasting life.'

If you feel that love to holiness which distinguishes all the disciples of Christ, you will wish your attention turned to the question which follows the discovery of the only atonement, 'What doth the Lord thy God require of thee?' It is this, 'to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.' How powerfully are these lessons of duty enforced by the sacrifice of Christ! Can you behold the justice of God demanding and receiving full satisfaction for sin, and imagine that it will connive at iniquity, or feel disposed to violate the rights of your brethren? Can you behold the unspeakable gift, the brightest display of goodness, and be churlish, envious, and cruel? Can you behold the awful majesty in which God appears as the Supreme Governor and Judge, and not learn to walk humbly with Him? He is your God; but there is something in the kindness of this title, and in the tenderness of this relation, which represses the levity and the presumption of the heart.

'Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.' When professors of religion become addicted to intemperance and impurity, it is seldom that they are brought to penitence and reformation. They live and die outcasts from the Church which they have dishonoured, and objects of contempt even to their associates

in vice. Cherish not one licentious thought or wish in your hearts; and let the fear of God, and the consciousness of His presence, control all the movements of the imagination and of the passions.

Give alms,' saith our Lord. 'Provide for yourselves bags that wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not.' Your gifts of charity will excite the derision of the rapacious worldling. In his estimation, they are completely thrown away. But the alms by which you alleviate the miseries of the poor, and procure the means of instruction for the ignorant and the erring, are deposited in the treasury of heaven, and shall be returned into your bosom in blessings which shall never end; while the gold of the miser shall be wrung from his grasp, and never shall meet his eye again, till the day when its canker shall witness against him, and when his money shall perish with him.

Go away from the table of your Lord, trusting in that delightful name which Abraham gave to the place where the trial of his faith terminated so happily, 'The Lord will provide.' Hath He provided this Lamb for a burnt-offering, and will He deny you either the temporal or the spiritual supplies which your situation may require? Fear not that poverty shall make you unhappy, or subvert, by its temptations, the integrity of your hearts. The power of religious principle shall suppress the repinings of discontent, and lighten the heaviest toils of industry. The love of your Father can fill the poorest dwelling with the blessings of heaven, and adorn its inhabitants with the graces of superior goodness.

Think not that you shall never attain future happiness. 'The Lamb is in the midst of the throne.' Can you contemplate that glorious object, without feeling the assurance of hope, and the unconquerable energy of virtuous resolution. In the hour of death, when that question shall confound the wicked, 'Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee, and whose shall all these things be which thou hast provided?' ye shall part, without a sigh, with this earth, and all your possessions in it, 'as knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and a more enduring substance.' Trust continually in the love of God. His rebukes are the voice of love; His chastenings are the strokes of its hand, and it will reign to your eternal life, through the merits of Christ Jesus your Lord.

ADDRESS III.

Behold I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.—GENESIS xxviii. 15.

SUCH were the gracious words which God addressed to Jacob from the top of the ladder, which he beheld in the visions of the night. From the height of His sanctuary, Christians, God speaks thus to you, 'Behold, I am with you.' The presence of God in His ordinances, sheds comfort and glory through them. In His absence, they are like a palace deserted by the prince. In His presence, they are like a palace, where the prince displays his majesty, and dispenses his favours. In His absence, they are like a landscape, which the setting of the sun has covered with darkness, where no bird is heard, and no flower is seen. In His presence, they are like a landscape, over which the sun spreads life, beauty, and gladness.

My brethren, is God now with you? Was His presence at His table, the object of your hope and desire? Do you now feel its influence, in elevating your minds above the world, in confounding your spiritual enemies, in invigorating the graces of religion within you, and in filling you with the sweetest persuasion of His love? 'Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.' Let wisdom improve His presence; let repentance and purity remove everything which might disgust Him, or provoke Him to leave you; and let affection cleave to Him, and refuse to let Him go.

To the pious soul, cast down and disquieted, God now saith, 'Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God.' These tears of penitence, a look from My Son has drawn forth, and here I have 'the garments of praise, to give thee for the spirit of heaviness.'

But God declares, that He will do that which He has spoken to His people of. To you there are given exceeding great and precious promises. Many of these have been accomplished to you already, and not one of those which yet remain to be fulfilled can fail. Think on His promises of pardon and sanctification, comfort and support, direction and assistance. You have brought these with you to the communion-table, and are now spreading them before Him, saying 'Remember the word to Thy servant, on which Thou hast caused me to hope.' 'Be-

hold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord thy God maketh with thee.' In these symbols of Christ's body and blood, we behold the promises sealed. We behold the most perfect demonstration, that 'though heaven and earth should pass away, one jot or one tittle shall not pass from these, till all shall be fulfilled.' Give up thy soul, O Christian, to the fullest reliance on the promises of God, and to the sweetest delight in the sure mercies of David. Far from that table, and from your hearts, be the language of distrust, 'Fails His promise for ever?' I hear you exclaiming, 'Faithful is He who hath promised, who also will do it.' By His word I live, and on it I will die. The mountain may be removed from its place, and the rock crumble to dust; but 'God, willing to shew to the heirs of promise, the immutability of His counsel, hath confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before us.'

'I will keep thee in all places whither thou goest.' You are not, like Jacob, in the midst of a journey to a strange land; but you know not where Providence may command you to bend your steps: but go where you may, the Lord is your keeper; His protecting arm, His fatherly care, and His unremitting watchfulness, shall be with you. How safe will you be under such a Guardian,—a Guardian ever present,—a Guardian whose eye never slumbers, and whose arm is almighty,—a Guardian who can guide you through the dark wilderness, and animate you amid the languors of the weary land! In the hour of temptation, He will keep you from falling; and in the scene of solitude, you shall say, 'I am not alone, for the Father is with me.' In the place of danger, the eternal God shall be your refuge. He will keep your feet from the snare,—your bones, so that not one of them shall be broken,—your dwellings, so that no evil shall come nigh you,—and your hearts, that they may not turn away from Him. Let the 121st Psalm be the companion of your journeys, and let it be the hope of your families, in a parent's absence, and in the departure of friends.

But God says further, 'I will not leave thee.' Ah! how often is this word spoken to mock credulity, and to disappoint the fond expectations of the simple and affectionate heart! Riches say, 'I will not leave thee;' but 'they make to themselves wings, and flee away as an eagle towards heaven.' Honours say, 'I will not leave thee;' but they pass away like the glistening dew on the grass in the morning. Friends say,

'I will not leave thee;' yet the suggestions of malice and caprice of temper often separate the most intimate associates; and by the power of death, lover and companion may be put far from us, and our acquaintance into darkness. That hand hath felt affection's last grasp; these ears have heard its last farewell. But God will not leave you. His heart will not leave you; 'My kindness shall not depart from thee.' His Spirit will not leave you, for 'the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you.' His care, His peace, and His ministering angels, will not leave you; 'for I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good.' And can you leave Him? How intolerable the thought! Not for all that the world can promise will we leave Thee, even for one moment. We exhort you, with purpose of heart, to cleave to the Lord.

He will bring you to the promised land, however long He may delay your arrival, and whatever enemies may oppose it. 'The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Sion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.' He will send His angels, to carry your spirits to Abraham's bosom. He will administer to you 'an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.' The body of Jacob was brought from Egypt to Canaan, but it was when the soul, whose affections would have made the gaze of the eye, and the tread of the foot on it so delightful, had left it to insensibility and corruption; but your bodies shall be brought to inherit the kingdom of God, in conjunction with spirits, from which they shall not again be separated. If you should die under the sad apprehension, that you are going to hell,—if you should imagine that the hand which grasps you, is dragging you away in your wickedness,—how unutterable will be the rapture with which you will find yourselves received into glory, and sing that song, 'We went through fire and through water, yet Thou broughtest us to a wealthy place!' We went through blackness, and darkness, and tempest, yet Thou didst lead us to everlasting rest! 'Having these promises, dearly beloved, we beseech you to cleanse yourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God. Thy Spirit is good, lead me to the land of uprightness.' Amen.

ADDRESS IV.

I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto Me: now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred.—GENESIS xxxi. 13.

How amazing is it that Jehovah should speak thus of any spot of this earth? The heavens are His with all their host, the earth in all its glory is only His footstool, yet He describes Himself as the God of Bethel. The spot thus honoured, was neither adorned by that pomp of kings, nor signalized by those trophies of war which attract, to particular scenes, the curiosity, or the veneration of men, but was wild and solitary; yet Jehovah viewed it with delight, as the place where He had manifested His glory to a heart that loved Him, and speaks of it in a manner which sweetly indicates this complacency, and points out His readiness to favour His people in all ages and places with similar communications.

There is no place too wild and lonely to be the scene of fellowship with God; nay, the more bleak and sequestered it is, the more does He manifest His goodness in exciting in it religious joy. It was the consciousness of this which made the Psalmist say, 'Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit, or flee from Thy presence; if I ascend into heaven, lo, Thou art there: If I make my bed in hell Thou art also there, and if I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me.' While John was in Patmos, an outcast from society, and far from the friends and the work he loved, he was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and had the brightest prospects of the triumphs of the Gospel, and of the glory of the Lamb opened to his view.

And if God holds communion with His people in such places, they have much more reason to expect it in the ordinances where His name is recorded, and His presence is promised. It is on this account that He is called the God of Sion, because in its various rites of worship His glory is displayed, and His grace is imparted. In the preaching of His word He sends forth His light and His truth; in the sacrament of baptism He pours out His Spirit and His blessing; and in the Lord's Supper, the bread and the wine are the communion of His body and blood. It is with the graces of His people that He holds fellowship—to their faith He unveils His glory—to their love, He displays His beauty—to their gratitude He unfolds His blessings, and to

their hope He reveals the destined inheritance. You are now longing for communion with God, and saying, 'Oh, when wilt Thou come unto me,' and I trust He will visit you with His sweet mercy, and cause you to say, 'We behold His glory full of grace and truth.'

In the vision at Bethel, there was a scene exhibited which suggests the most interesting meditations at the communion table. A ladder was seen reaching from earth to heaven, and Jehovah stood at the top of it. This was an emblem of that restoration of our intercourse with God, which has been effected by the mediation of Christ. We by nature are enemies to God, labour under the effects of His displeasure, and have reason to fear more tremendous consequences of it in a future world; and no intelligence can be so delightful as this, that we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. He now speaks to us with the voice of love, and welcomes our return to Him with a Father's smile. Our condition is very different from that of heathens, who were left in the same distracting uncertainty on this point, and were rendered miserable amidst their costliest oblations, by their fears that their rites and their sacrifices were vain, for we can joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation. The believer in the atonement may regard the character of God under the softest images of tenderness and peace, and can rejoice that at His throne he hath no condemnation to fear, and that in His darkest cloud there is no bolt to destroy. Such contemplations have excited the liveliest gratitude to Him who submitted so promptly to be 'made a curse for us,' and with such sacred feelings may your hearts now glow to the generous Mediator between God and man. And it becomes you to cherish fervid gratitude to that God who devoted the Son of His love to suffer and to die, to save you from destruction. This love is infinite; this gift is unspeakable; and they claim our everlasting wonder and praise.

Such were the views which Jacob had at Bethel, and such are the objects which are more fully presented to you in the cross. Now, God says to you, 'I am the God of Calvary, where Jesus suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring you to God,' and let your faith and love, your gratitude and joy, now reply, 'O Lord I will praise Thee; though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortest me. Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid, for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song, and He also is become my salvation.'

It was at Bethel that Jacob took the stone which had been his pillow, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil on the top of it; and it was here that he vowed a vow, saying, 'If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God, and this stone which I have set for a pillar shall be God's house, and of all that Thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto Thee.' This memorial was simple, but God regarded it with delight, as the expression of grateful homage, and this vow was recorded in His book of remembrance. It is not of a splendid temple, or of a magnificent ceremony that God thus speaks, but of a rude and lowly pillar, and of a vow made in utter solitude. Superstition hath boasted of the majesty of the columns it has reared to His name, and of the sublimity of the hymns it hath sung in His praise; but to all its structures He prefers the rudest pillar which gratitude erects, and on which the tear of repentance falls, and to all its pealing anthems, the holy wish, and the virtuous purpose of the renovated heart.

Ye young disciples, let this be the vow you now make at His table, that your heart shall be His. The sweetest sound which can rise from earth to heaven is the vow of early piety: 'He is my God, and I will exalt Him, my father's God, and I will prepare Him a habitation.' The witness and the record of this vow are on high, and you will be reminded of it hereafter to your shame, or to your joy;—to your shame, if it is forgotten and violated—to your joy, if you have kept the faith.

Ye who are in middle life, devote to Him your active days. Others at this period are devoting the prime of their faculties to worldly wealth, and to worldly ambition; but we trust you are now dedicating, and will hereafter direct yours to the service of God. Piety will lighten all your cares, guide all your steps, and sanctify all your engagements.

And let aged disciples devote to God what may remain of life. God is now reminding you of the solemnities of your early days, and of the purposes which you formed in them, and which He hath kept you from disregarding, and while He does so, consecrate the evening of life to the remembrance of His name, and the declaring of His works; yea, this day make your vow for eternity, and ere you rise from that table, let this be your resolution: 'I will extol Thee, my God, O King; every day will I do it, and I will bless Thy name for ever and ever.' It becomes you to show both to God and to the world, that instead of finding reason to complain of His dispensations, or to become languid in His service, you feel yourselves more

strongly bound than ever to keep His commandments and to abide in His love.

You are now on the brink of the grave, and it becomes you to set up your stone of memorial on that spot, and to inscribe on it the affecting expression of gratitude, 'Hitherto hath the Lord helped.' And you may be assured, that the God who hath blessed by His mercy all the former periods of your life, will not leave you comfortless now. He will refresh you, when weary, with the dew of your youth, and with the first fruits of paradise.

To all of you God is saying, 'Arise, get thee out of this land, and return to the land of thy kindred.' While you remain in the world, let your affections be set on things above: and when the hour of your departure shall arrive, go without reluctance and without dismay to the house of your Father. This world is a strange land to you; you have another spirit than that of its children, and you regard its follies with contempt, and its pollutions with abhorrence. Its fairest attractions have lost their power over your hearts; for you have seen and felt their vanity, and you have found, in the scenes which seemed most innocent and safe, temptations perilous to your virtue, and sorrows which wounded your hearts. But the better country is the land of your kindred, and your best friends are there. If you have friends on earth who are unwilling to part with you, and with regard to whom it is painful to you to think that your death will be to them a grievous loss, reflect that you have friends in heaven longing for your arrival, that the Friend whom you value supremely, is praying that you may be with Him to behold His glory, and that your helpless and sorrowing relatives will find in Him strength and consolation which no human heart or hand could ever have yielded.

In that land of your kindred no absence shall interrupt your intercourse, nor shall it ever be embittered by any evil passion, or by any disastrous incident. The spirits of the just will acknowledge you as their brethren, and the friends whose departure made this world to you a dreary land, under whose burdens they can no longer assist you, and from whose evils they can no longer protect you, shall meet you in heaven in perfect love, and feel in their first embrace the blessed assurance, 'we shall never part more.' And the time will come when your dead bodies shall arise, and united again to their spirits, shall dwell for ever in that land of the living where every countenance is that of a friend, where every song is salvation, and where every feeling is pure and happy.

ADDRESS V.

And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold there stood a man over against him, with his sword drawn in his hand; and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay, but as captain of the Lord's host am I now come.—JOSHUA v. 13, 14.

THE warrior who thus speaks, is, my Christian brethren, the Captain of your salvation. He is the Captain of the Lord's host, by His Father's appointment, 'Behold I have given Him for a leader and commander of the people;' and He hath the best title to this office, from His admirable wisdom, patience, and courage; from the matchless victories He has gained, and from the unwearied care, with which He provides for the safety, the happiness, and the glory of His host.

The language of the profession you are now making, is, 'We are Christ's.' We belong to His chosen band, and we are come to His table, to swear that we will be faithful to the death. Have you quitted the camp of His enemies, with a firm determination never to return to it? Have you joined yourselves to the Lord, to serve Him, and to love His name? Is Christ's law your delight? Are poverty, reproach, labour, and pain, in His cause, far sweeter to you than all worldly happiness? Is it your study to show yourselves approved to Him? Is this the character you are most ambitious to attain, 'Good soldiers of Jesus Christ?' Is this the reflection which you wish above all others to cheer your minds, as the failing eye looks back from a death-bed on the scenes of life, 'I have fought a good fight?' If such are your feelings, if thus you have acted, I am authorized to say that you belong to the Lord's host. You need not ask, with Joshua, 'Art Thou for us, or for our adversaries?' What He hath done in your cause entitles you to say, I know God is for me; 'The Lord is on my side, I will not fear what man can do to me.' That drawn sword is reeking with the blood of your foes, and Jesus is saying, 'See what I have done to save you!'

What is the impression which this scene, Christians, is making on your minds? Are your hearts laid low in reverence and adoration? Is this their language, 'What saith my Lord to His servant?' Be Thy injunctions ever so difficult, I will endeavour to execute them; and let them be ever so painful to flesh and blood, 'I delight to do Thy will, O my God.' Hear what He commands: 'Loose off thy shoe from thy foot, for the place where thou standest is holy.' It is sanctified by

the Redeemer's presence. 'Holiness becometh thine house for ever.' Cast away thy worldly anxieties and cares, and let the Redeemer have all thy thoughts, all thy affections, and all thy homage.

But I hear the broken voice of the trembling soul, saying, 'The appearance of Christ is so majestic, that I am sinking with dismay;' yet to you it is the majesty of love. Could you read His heart, you would see it to be the heart of a friend; and even now, on His face you may discern pity's mildest gleam, and affection's sweetest smile. Mercy rejoicing over judgment marks His steps, and grace abounding waves on His banner. Desolation and misery attend not His progress; but charity with its fruits, and peace with its blessings. Is it your unfaithfulness to Him in time past that afflicts you? He may take vengeance on your inventions, but He will have mercy upon your souls. Confess your folly at His feet, and to you He will say, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee, go in peace.' To His foes He says, 'O thou enemy, thy destructions are come to a perpetual end!' but to you He saith, 'Eat, O friends! drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved!'

'Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, this that is glorious in His apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.' Here, O Christians, is a subject for your songs, in time and through eternity—the conquering Saviour's excellencies, victories, and love. With these all heaven will resound, and with these shall not your hearts and lips be filled? Nothing is so intimidating to your enemies as the song, 'The right hand of the Lord is exalted, the right hand of the Lord doth valiantly,' and nothing can be more animating to your own hearts. 'Happy art thou, O Israel! who is like unto thee? O people, saved by the Lord, who is the shield of thy help, and the sword of thine excellency, and thine enemies shall be found liars to thee, and thou shalt ride upon their high places.' In all His majesty, Christ is your honour; in all His victories, He is your triumph; in all His ways, He is your friend; and in all His salvation, He is your portion. No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper, for He hath given you the shield of His salvation, and every tongue that riseth against you in judgment He will condemn. Having done so much for your cause on earth, He will not abandon it in heaven. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord; and their righteousness is of Me, saith the Lord.

Contemplating your Leader in His dyed garments, and in

His glorious apparel, you will hate the garment that is spotted with the flesh, the spirit, and the cloak of maliciousness. He travels in the greatness of His strength, following up His victories, and deems not even the conflict, and the triumph of Calvary, sufficient for the shame of His foes, and for your honour; and shall you think that you have attained, or are already perfect? No; 'forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forward to the things that are before, press forward to the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.' Does He speak in righteousness? 'In simplicity and in godly sincerity, maintain your conversation in the world.' The tongue of the just is as choice silver. Remember what you have said to Him at His table, and fulfil it: 'I have opened my mouth to the Lord, and I cannot go back.' Is He mighty to save? Save as He doth, you cannot; but you may be the ministers of happiness to the souls and bodies of men. By the cordial that recovers the exhausted frame, and by the watchful attentions of kindness and skill, you may redeem life from destruction. By your warnings and entreaties, your counsels and example, you may convert a sinner from the error of his ways, and thus save a soul from death, and cover a multitude of sins.

Let the honours of the Captain of salvation be dearer to you than your chief joy; and let this be the character of all who follow His standard: 'they helped every one his neighbour, and every one said to his brother, Be of good courage.' Intreat Him to go forth conquering and to conquer, till the strongholds of darkness are levelled with the dust, and till the last enemy is destroyed. 'Gird Thy sword on Thy thigh, O most mighty; and in Thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth, of meekness, and of righteousness.' Rejoice that soon it shall be said to you, 'The Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see no more for ever.' At death you shall be set completely free from them. Sin you shall see no more, till that day when you shall behold it charged upon the wicked, and borne away with them to the place of torment. Devils ye shall behold no more, till you see them driven away from the Conqueror's throne, as the associates of impenitent men in misery. At the great day, you shall see the earth and its works burnt up, the world and its fashion pass away, and death and hell cast into the lake of fire; but when you behold the Captain of salvation coming from heaven in His glory, 'Lo, this is our God, we have waited for Him, and He will save us; this is our God, we have waited for Him, we will be glad, and rejoice in His salvation.' It is not merely in the day of judgment, but

through eternity, that He will be glorified in His saints, and admired in all them that believe. Happy and glorious shall He be in you, and you in Him. Your heads shall be crowned with everlasting glory, your hands shall wave the unfading palm, your hearts shall be sacred to eternal charity, and your lips devoted to songs ever new. Surely, such hopes as these must animate you in the conflicts of religion, arm you with fortitude in the hour of temptation, and make you willing to resist even unto blood, striving against sin. 'Be thou faithful to the death, and I will give thee a crown of life.' Amen.

ADDRESS VI.

Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go, and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me.—RUTH i. 16, 17.

THESE words express the choice you have made, and the holy purposes which you have formed, and which you are now to renew in partaking of the symbols of the body and the blood of the Lord. Ruth had been made acquainted with the character and laws of the God of Israel, during her connection with the son of Naomi; and though she had no prospect but that of poverty in a strange land, she determined to live and to die among the true worshippers of Jehovah. Her resolution breathes the spirit of 'an Israelite indeed,' and the choice she here expresses is marked by various characters which may assist you in examining the nature of your attachment to religion, and may animate you to cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart.

This choice is full and unlimited. The God of Israel is the object of her choice, as the Lord whom she was willing to serve, and the God whose blessing could alone render her happy. His people she chooses as her companions, and in every path which they tread she resolves to accompany them. And have you made an unreserved choice of Jesus and His ways? If we are willing to take the Lord for our portion, but will not submit to Him as our Sovereign; if we are disposed to associate only with those of the saints who are high in station, and if there are parts of duty which we cannot be brought to practise without the utmost reluctance, and which

we avail ourselves of every pretext to shun, we are strangers to the spirit of genuine piety. Whatever bears the traces of God's image it loves, and to all that is stamped with His authority it bows.

There are some objects and scenes in religion which may appear more attracting than others; but there is none which the pious heart does not love, there is no service which it seeks to avoid, and no requirement which it wishes expunged or mitigated. And are you now saying, 'Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?' To me Thy whole will is sacred and dear. Whatever it calls me to perform I will attempt, and whatever it requires me to suffer, I will bear. There is something peculiarly delightful to a pious mind in obeying the severest requirements of religion, from the consciousness which is felt of our thus proving the power of our attachment to those whom we love above all, and from that Divine strength and comfort which is always proportioned to the difficulties of our condition and duty.

This choice is affectionate. The language of Ruth is not that of carelessness, or of dissimulation, but we see in it all the eagerness and fervour of holy love. And the choice which the pious soul makes of religion is not like that of the formalist, who yields to it only bodily service, and who feels, amidst his professions of complacency, that it is an irksome task; but it is the dictate of enlightened and supreme affection. It is an indignity to religion to take hold of it with an averted look, or with a reluctant sigh. The pious soul has seen the Divine excellence and beauty in such a light as fills it with rapturous admiration, and to possess the image of such a Being appears the brightest glory of its nature, and to have an interest in His regard seems the summit of its happiness, both for time and for eternity. The pious soul sees something to charm it in the meanest dwellings of the good, for God is there; in their most dreary and rugged paths, for the way of the Lord is strength to the upright; and in their death, however agonizing, for the latter end of the perfect man is peace.

This choice was determined. 'I am a stranger,' as if she had said, 'to the covenants of promise; but though God should slay me, yet will I trust in Him. I am an alien to the commonwealth of Israel; but though they should frown upon me, I will cleave to them. The journey may be tedious and exhausting, through want of necessary support, and from the difficulties and the dreariness of the path; yet I will accompany them. Thy habitation may be poor and comfortless, yet it shall be my rest; and though thy grave shall be far from the

burying-place of my fathers, in it shall my body be laid. I have considered the matter in every form, and I cannot leave thee.'

Is your choice of religion as determined? If it is made in any other spirit than this, it will not abide the jest of the scorner, the solicitation of corrupt passions, nor the afflictions of the Gospel. The jest of the scorner will make you ashamed to avow it, or to act up to it; the sophistry of vice will strengthen the impressions which made you hesitate; and under the reproach of Christ, you will go back, and walk no more with Him. If it is made under the influence of the spirit of power and of love, none of these things will move you; and as your Saviour undertook your cause, and fulfilled all His engagements, with a firmness which no threats could shake, and a constancy which no agonies could subdue, let the same mind be in you which was also in Him, and add to your faith fortitude.

This choice is final. It is made for life. Its spirit is this, 'I may be solicited to serve other gods, but this God is my God for ever. Nature may raise a sigh for mine own people, and my father's house, but the joys of religious fellowship I will not forego; and even when thine eyes are closed, and I am left alone, I will neither quit the land nor the worship of Israel; I will die in thy hope, and I will sleep in thy grave.'

The choice we make of God and His ways is not for a season. Some are serious only in the time of affliction; they will then solicit the counsels and prayers of the pious, and declare their purpose to be holy; but returning health effaces these impressions, and they consider them as a weakness of which they may be ashamed. The enthusiast, whose affections are kindled into a fierce and momentary blaze, makes loud professions, and urges his plans with great vehemence, but he soon falls away. But the pious man stands fast in the Lord, and there is not a scene of his life, nor a moment of his being, in which he would consider himself safe without the influence, or happy without the comforts of religion. He will have no other Saviour than Jesus, and no other course than moral goodness; and his language is, 'till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me; my righteousness I hold fast, and I will not let it go; my heart shall not reproach me so long as I shall live.' The God of Israel may leave him to walk in darkness, yet will he wait on Him; His people may be neglected and contemned by ungodly men, yet will not he abandon them; if they are scattered over deserts and mountains, he will wander with them; if they lodge in dens and caves of the earth, there will he abide; they may be buried in places deemed infamous by the world, yet there

would he rather be laid to share the repose of the just, than in the most splendid receptacles of triumphant villany.

This choice of Ruth was made in spite of many discouragements. Her mother-in-law set before her all the difficulties she might expect, and she saw the widow of her husband's brother so influenced by the prospect as to abide in Moab ; yet was her purpose unshaken. You may perhaps have friends who are averse from religion, and neighbours disposed to ridicule rather than to follow your piety ; yet you must now say with Peter's zeal, ' though all men should forsake Thee, yet will not I.' Beware lest you say it with the presumption which led him to disregard all admonition, and to brave temptation, but express it with a humble dependence on that grace which can confirm you to the end, and with an affectionate sense of your peculiar obligations to that Redeemer who loved you, and gave Himself for you.

To her purpose Ruth adds a very solemn oath, to convince Naomi how firmly she was resolved to adhere to her, and to strengthen the pious resolutions of her own soul. Whatever might occur to disgust her in Judea, and whatever alluring messages might be sent to her to induce her to return to Moab, this would be her answer, ' I have opened my mouth to the Lord, and I cannot go back.' You have now been pledging yourselves by the most sacred vows to serve your Redeemer, and are, I trust, disposed to say, like the Psalmist, ' I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep Thy righteous judgments.' The recollection of these vows will furnish you with an additional argument in answer to the solicitations of temptation, and they will be regarded by you as a restraint from folly, and as a motive to pious exertion, which the best require in the present state.

Ruth might be afraid that after the attractions of the land of Israel were no longer new to her, her affections might revert to her native country, to the scenes where her childhood sported, and her youth rejoiced, and where the objects were which first interested the heart. There is something in the abode where our infancy was cherished, and in the spot where the gay hours of early life were spent, which makes the heart to long for them though we are separated from them by thousands of miles, and though scores of years have elapsed since we quitted them. But the recollection of these vows would make Ruth bless God that He had brought her from a land of idols, and when she thought of her country, to bewail the gross darkness which covered it. If we are conscious that there are quarters where we are espe-

cially in danger from the influence of temptation, it will be wise to form a solemn purpose of peculiar watchfulness there; and if there are duties from which our hearts shrink, we must resolve to make every effort to discharge them fully. Dreadful is that hour in which conscience presents to us the vows we have violated, and they cannot be beheld without shame and consternation. At this moment your hearts are wrung with the recollection of your broken vows, which in the moments of sacred rapture you thought would never be infringed, and you are now trembling at the idea, which to you is most painful, that you may by the power of temptation be induced to disregard those you have now made, to the dishonour of God, and to the detriment and peril of your souls; but commit yourselves to your Saviour's care, and while you do so, watch and pray that you enter not into temptation.

Let me call upon you to maintain the choice you have made, and have this day avowed. 'O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, thou art my Lord,' and no expression of my lips, no wish of my heart, and no action of my life, shall ever utter a different language. Beware of everything which will make the sincerity of your choice of religion questionable. Engage not in the pursuits of the world with that devotedness to them which is incompatible with any of the claims of your holy profession: and let not the men of the world be your favourite associates. Say not, I make them so to do them good, for instead of benefiting them, they may contaminate you, they can have no kindred feelings with you, and the young and the simple may employ your example to encourage themselves in intimacies which will involve them in ruin.

Often call to your remembrance the examples of this choice, and of fidelity to it, which have been set before you. Ruth was bound to Moab by many ties, yet she breaks through them all, and says, 'I am the Lord's.' Moab might abhor her as a traitress to her country, and from the grave of her fathers she heard a voice to which the ear of nature never can be closed; yet all this could not shake her purpose to live and die with the worshippers of the true God. Think of Moses, who saw more to charm him in the trials of Israel than in the pleasures of Egypt, and in the reproach of Christ than in the crown of Pharaoh. Nor was this a transient emotion of piety, for these impressions remained unchanged amidst all the perils of the wilderness, and all the ingratitude and perverseness of the Jews; and even while the displeasure of his God excluded him from Canaan, he blessed Him that he was not shut out from heaven, and died in the land of Moab, in calm submission and

joyful hope. Think of Paul, who counted all his privileges and distinctions loss for Christ, and who maintained this pious determination amidst unparalleled trials of his constancy, both as to number, severity, and duration. In prisons and stripes, in threats and abuse, in hunger and nakedness, at the bar and on the scaffold, he could say, 'None of these things move me.' Think of the pious friends who exhorted you to make this choice, who from the bed of death recommended it to you, and who having lived by the faith of the Son of God, and followed Him in the graces of His character, left the world with such prospects, that you felt disposed to say, 'Let us go also, that we may die with them.' Now we desire that every one of you do show the same zeal and patience in supporting the credit, in fulfilling the duties, and in surmounting the difficulties, of your holy profession.

Consider the advantages which will result from your adherence to this choice: you shall have the Ruler of the world for your friend, the God of all grace for your portion, the Father of glory for your reward, and God blessed for ever, for your felicity. Compared with such privileges the treasures of the world are emptiness, and the honours of princes vanity. You shall have the excellent of the earth for your brethren and your friends, your comforters and your guides. In walking with them, you shall be led in the path of life, and in dying with them, you shall share in the happiness which the voice of the Spirit thus declares: 'Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, they rest from their labours, and their works follow them.' To be buried with them, is to sleep in Jesus as they do, nor shall death part you long. It will take you to the spirits of just men made perfect, and in a few years it will reunite in glory those whom it had separated. Death parts, but it unites also; and there is more joy in the union, than there was sorrow in the separation. In a short time your soul shall be associated with those whose fervid devotion so often roused your languid piety, whose kind solicitude for your welfare secured your confidence, and stimulated your improvement; whose gentleness and candour taught you to be mild and charitable; and whose lofty and joyful hopes carried so frequently your hearts to heaven. Nor is this all; for the resurrection of the just shall be your resurrection, their mercy in judgment shall be your mercy, their home your home, their glory your glory, their worship your worship, and their felicity your felicity. Amen.

ADDRESS VII.

I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan; very pleasant hast thou been unto me; thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.

2 SAMUEL i. 26.

THE lamentation of David over the death of his friend Jonathan, is marked by exquisite pathos. The excellencies of his character, and the circumstances of his fate, are exhibited with a skill which calls forth all the power of fancy, and with a generous sensibility which melts the heart. David forgets all the envy and violence of the father, and can think of nothing but the worth and friendship of the son. The excellencies of a friend never strike the heart so much as when the sad conclusion is forced upon us, that we shall see his face no more, and the enjoyments of friendship seem most delightful when we feel that they are gone never to return. David mourns that a man so excellent should perish in the prime of his days, and that so brave a soldier should fall before his enemies; but his heart bleeds at the thought, that a friend in whom he had promised himself so much happiness was snatched from him, and would never again heighten his joys, sooth his cares, or share his perils. He fondly remembers the sweetness of his manners, the generosity of his character, the ardour of his attachment, and his unwearied solicitude for his interest, and speaks as if he thought that there was not in all his country, nor in all his family, a heart that loved him like the heart of Jonathan.

Christians, you are now contemplating the death of a Friend, of whose love the kindness of Jonathan was but a faint shadow, and who died while contending with your enemies, but who died more than a conqueror. You are sorrowing, and why do ye mourn? If it is at the insults of His enemies, the tortures of the cross, or the severity of His agony, Jesus thus addresses you, 'Weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves. It is not for the tear of sympathy, but of contrition, that I now call. Sorrow for those sins which I died to expiate, and let the contemplation of My sufferings excite in you all the regrets, and lead you to all the amendment of true repentance.'

How dear and how interesting is the relation in which Jesus stands to you! He is not ashamed to call you brethren, and He will not be offended with the affection and pious confidence which is now looking to Him, and calling Him 'my Brother.' You are members of the same family. One is your Father,

even God, and you have one spirit with Him. He now surveys you sitting at His table in obedience to His command, and in love to his name, and says before angels and archangels, 'Behold My mother and My brethren, for he that doeth the will of My Father who is in heaven, the same is My brother, My sister, and mother.' He hath the majesty of a sovereign, the righteousness of a judge, and the splendour of a conqueror; but He hath also the heart of a brother; and from Him you may expect all the kind attentions, and all the steady affection which this relation demands.

Jesus is indeed very pleasant to His people in the beauties of His character, the endearments of His love, and the blessings of His grace. The time spent in His society is the happiest of your life: your fears are dispelled by the assurances of His care, and your sorrows relieved in pouring out your complaint to Him. His glory gives a charm to His condescension, which enraptures the soul, and by the amplitude of His stores He is able to fulfil every purpose of His own heart, and to gratify every wish of ours. You feel that for one smile of His countenance, one expression of His love, and one token of His kindness, you could renounce the world were it all your own. Friendship hath no pleasure so delightful, and life no joy so sweet.

His love to you was wonderful. Heaven cannot shew more of its wonders than the cross; for there they are displayed in the arduousness of His conflict, the extremity of His sufferings, and the vileness of His shame. The sun is darkened to attest how love veiled His glory, the rocks rend to proclaim its power, and the graves open to shew that His affection survives the disruption of every earthly tie, and will triumph in the resurrection of the just.

But His love to you is wonderful. David knew not whether Jonathan still loved him. His attachment may have perished amid the overwhelming scenes of eternity, and though it did exist, he was not aware of any benefit which it could yield, or any form in which it could be displayed. But we know that Jesus in heaven is as affectionate and compassionate as ever, and His wondrous love may be seen there in the fervour and the constancy of His intercession, in the extent and the value of His preparations for your happiness, and in the condescension and the tenderness of His care.

And what created love can be compared with His? The utmost height to which human affection goes, is to share its possessions with the object beloved. 'What is thy petition,' said Ahasuerus to his queen, 'and what is thy request, and it

shall be granted thee to the half of the kingdom?' But the love of Jesus raises its objects to the right hand of the Majesty on high. The utmost depth to which human affection goes is to the dust of death for its object. 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man should lay down his life for his friend.' But Jesus died under the curse, and for His enemies. The utmost extent of human affection is to sacrifice friends and country for the sake of its object, and to go with him to distant climes, in the idea that by his side we shall find a home. But what is this to that tender mercy which Jesus spreads over all His works, and to that grace which made Him come from the bosom of His Father to dwell with mortals? The utmost length of human affection is life. Death is the close of human friendship, as well as of human glory. The tear of love can no more melt the cold heart, than the pomp of the world can elevate the humbled clay; but the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on them that fear Him.

The strongest of all human attachments has been supposed to be that of a mother to her child. 'Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb! yea, she may forget, but I will not forget thee, I have graven thee on the palms of My hands, and thy walls are continually before Me.' There is an allusion here to a custom among the Jews, who used to mark on their hands a picture or representation of Jerusalem, to shew their zeal, and to cherish their affection for it, and it beautifully points out how the saints are ever before their Saviour as objects of care and love, a care and love compared with which, human vigilance seems heedless, and human affection cold. And now, Christians, it is our wish that you may taste that the Lord is gracious, and that His love shed abroad in your heart, and blessing the exercise of a communion table, may render this service the earnest of heaven.

Let not the sorrow of penitence be limited to this service, but let it mingle fear and caution with the exultation and the mirth of prosperity; let it sanctify your grief in the day of worldly calamity, let it induce you to watch against the temptations by which your hearts have been enticed, and animate you to greater activity in holiness.

Maintain that confidence in Jesus which He so justly claims, and have no fellowship with those who are hostile to His interests, and indifferent to His glory. Let there not be reason to say that your professions of kindness have been those of treachery like Joab, when he said to Amasa, 'Art thou in

health, my brother,' and while he kissed him, smote him under the fifth rib, and shed out his bowels to the ground; but shew that your heart is as affectionate as your words, by the careful avoidance of every sin, and by the uniform support of all that is pious in principle and feeling. I call on you to walk in the light of His countenance, and assure you that it will be by your own fault if ever your intercourse with Jesus is interrupted, or embittered by His language of upbraiding or His frowns of displeasure.

Be ashamed of the defects of your love to Him. There is much about your love to amaze us, but it is not that it is so ardent, so elevated, and so potent, but that it is so cold, so unsteady, and so inoperative. You see the degree of the miser's love to his gold in his haggard look, his excessive toil, his vigilant care, and his bread of carefulness. We see the degree of the ambitious man's love to false glory in the sacrifices which he has made, and in the scars which he bears; but the conduct of too many of the disciples of Jesus shews with what reluctance they yield up what is dear, endure what is painful, or perform what is arduous for His sake. Place your hearts directly under the influence of His cross, that His dying love may raise every affection to its highest pitch, and fix them all on Him, and with Him may they remain unalienated to eternity. Devote to His love all the faculties of the soul, all the thoughts of the mind, all the feelings of the heart, all the vigour of the strength, and all the purposes and efforts of the life. Employ in His service every talent you possess, and every moment that you live. Serve Him in every place, in every company, and in every condition. Beware of seeking to conciliate the good will of the wicked and the profane, by the least symptom of acquiescence in their statements and plans, and never lose sight of that fidelity to your Master which you have this day pledged. Honour your Lord by the courtesies of brotherly kindness in the intercourse of life, by employing the gains of prosperity in works of piety and mercy, by a calm and humble temper and manners in every season, and in every species of calamity, by melting seriousness and godly fear in His worship, and by patient suffering and elevated hope in your last hour.

And as David did not think that he had given a sufficient testimony of his friendship to Jonathan in this lamentation, but sought out, patronized, and protected his children for his sake, so your regard to Jesus must be shewn in kindness to His disciples, because they belong to Him, and bear His image. Some of them require your counsel, others your sympathy, and others

your alms, and all of them your prayers. And shall not you be willing to distribute, and ready to communicate? It is a delightful thought that Jesus will accept that beneficence as if it had supplied His own wants, and that sympathy as if it had alleviated His own woes.

Let not the presumption of the heart flatter you with the idea that the friends whom you love will always be spared to you. The heart which has so often been delighted with their society, must mourn their departure, and they may be taken from you not in the way that is common to man, or by a disease in which it may be in your power to minister to their comfort, but in battle, or at sea, or by fatal accidents. If called to such a trial of your faith and patience as this, imagine not that these circumstances of their departure, are in themselves indications of God's hatred of them or of you. Remember how Jonathan died, and David mourned, and say, 'It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth good in His sight.' A stern philosophy laboured to repress, and to extinguish the feelings, but the religion you profess guides and controls them, gives comfort when they are most severely wounded, and renders their agitation a mean of amending the heart.

Let your temper and manners be such as will make your own departure be regretted by those who may survive you; and it is only the suavity, the kindness, and the integrity of a benevolent and honest heart, which will secure you a place in the remembrance of the good. When the tongue of eloquence is silent, or the thoughts of the man of research perish, not a heart bleeds, and not a tear falls; but when the face is changed where benignity smiled, and when the heart is cold where compassion glowed, such a sorrow is excited as shews, that while splendid talents may excite admiration, gentleness and humanity alone awaken love, and it is love alone that mourns at the grave. 'Put on therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness and long-suffering;' thus your life will be felt as a blessing, and your death as a loss; and thus will you pass from the regrets of friends to the kindest welcome of the spirits of the just, and of Him whose love is the bliss of heaven.

ADDRESS VIII.

And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept; and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!

2 SAMUEL xviii. 33.

Few scenes are so melting to the heart, as a parent in tears over the ruin of his hopes; and he must be devoid of feeling, who can pass by him in such circumstances without a sigh of pity. But even such a scene, in point of deep interest, is not to be compared with that which you are now commemorating! The pathetic language of David was expressive only of his wish; and, had that wish been granted, his heart might have shrunk back. It is easy to make light of death, when every pulse beats strong with health; but to rejoice in the pangs that are terminating our existence, is an effort to which few are found equal. But did Jesus Christ satisfy Himself with wishes to die in our stead, expressed in the language of passionate earnestness? 'It is Christ that died.' He came to die for you, and for you He gives up the ghost.

Absalom's conduct was marked by criminal excesses; yet, though a profligate and a rebel, in the partial eye of a father he possessed some amiable qualities, which checked those sterner passions that called for his destruction. But in the sight of God 'the heart of the sons of men is full of evil; madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead.'

Had David died for Absalom, he, as a good man, would have met his latter end in peace. The hope of his son's amendment, the satisfaction which generous conduct inspires, and the prospect of eternal happiness in heaven, would have made the last struggle easy. But the death which Jesus endured was attended with excruciating pain of body and mind; nor did one smile from heaven, or one token of compassion from the surrounding populace, mitigate the horrors of the dreadful scene, or soothe the soul which was encompassed with the sorrows of hell. Had Absalom lived, the generous affection of his father might perhaps have produced a reformation in his temper and conduct; but it was possible that he might become sevenfold more the child of wrath than before: but those for whom Christ died 'are redeemed from all iniquity, and purified to Himself a peculiar people, zealous in good works.'

Absalom was David's son. Five times does he mention this,

in the broken language of sorrow. And, 'can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb?' Can a father forget the son of his vows? But we were the children of the devil, led captive by him at his will; yet for us Christ died, and 'herein is love.'

I trust, Christians, that you are contemplating this scene with wonder and gratitude. I trust that you are saying of love that passeth knowledge, I see its evidence in sorrow to which no sorrow was ever like, and in blessings with which all the advantages of the world are not to be compared. I feel its influence in this crucified flesh, and in this soul that follows hard after Jesus. I have come to Thy table, that, in partaking of the symbols of Thy body and blood, I may taste that Thou art gracious, and may raise at the foot of the cross the exclamation which suits that place above all others, 'How excellent is Thy loving-kindness, O God!'

Christians, satisfy not yourselves with mere wishes to serve your Redeemer. When we have it not in our power to do what the feelings dictate, it is good that it was in our heart to promote His glory. But let us never withhold our hand, while we are able to advance His cause. You often say in your hearts, Would to God that I could have ministered to Him of my substance, as some of His favoured disciples did; but behold the representatives of our Lord in the helpless orphan, the mournful prisoner, the man oppressed with poverty, and the widow broken in heart. In relieving them, you minister to Him. No motive to kindness is equal to this; this the Gospel alone exhibits. Your hearts often say, Would to God that I could have followed Him from the garden, to His Cross, and to His grave! but you may bear about with you in the body, the dying of the Lord Jesus; you wish that you could have praised Him, with the heavenly host, but like them you may glorify Him with your spirits; and more than them, you can glorify Him with your bodies, which are His.

Hath Christ died for you, and can you live to yourselves? What can be more ungrateful, more base, and more preposterous than this? To whom ought you to live, but to Him who died for you, and rose again? Who can contrast, even for one moment, selfishness and piety in their workings, without exclaiming, 'To me to live shall be Christ!' Selfishness says, I will gratify my own wishes, but piety says, Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? The language of selfishness is, Give, give, but that of piety is, Take all that Thou seest necessary for the purposes of Thy glory, though the most valued acqui-

tion in my store, or the dearest comfort of my heart. Selfishness hath a hand so closed, that none can open it, but that of piety is ever ready to communicate. Selfishness may be constrained to promote the happiness of others, by that Providence which sent the ravens with bread and flesh to Elijah ; but the pious heart yields its blessings with a cheerful promptitude ; and if regret is felt, it is only that it hath not more to bestow.

Be on your guard against passionate wishes for death. These are sometimes dictated by peevishness and impatience. The children of Israel, when in want of water, fretted against Moses, and said, ' Would to God we had died when our brethren died in the wilderness.' But would you snatch the keys of hell and of death from Christ's hands ? Hath He shown Himself unfit to use them, or unworthy to be entrusted with them ? Will these keys be better placed in your own ? Had you died sooner, your troubles might have been fewer, and your separation shorter from those whom you loved ; but your virtuous attainments would have been less eminent, your crown less splendid, and your re-union perhaps less delightful.

Remember that you are not to die to yourselves, to consult merely your own comfort and safety in dying ; but you must die for the Church and for the Lord, by edifying those around you, and glorifying your Saviour by your final testimony, and by the vigorous exercise of that charity which never fails, and of that living, immortal goodness, which, even in the valley of the shadow of death, springs up to eternal life.

Parents, take heed lest the reproaches of conscience mingle with the lamentations of nature over the graves of your children. Make every possible effort for their salvation ; then, should they die in early life, you will rejoice that they are in heaven before you. The most horrible pang which can wring a parent's heart, rises from the dread of a child's damnation. Let not the young forget the vows of this day, and do not, by your mingling with the carnal and the profane in their wicked practices, force upon your parents, when you are gone, the conviction, that their God hath cast you off for ever. The Redeemer now calls you to steadfastness in your profession, and to constancy in goodness, by this melting thought, that you shall soon die ; and that the idea of your happiness will preserve your parents from overwhelming sorrow, and the memory of your virtues be the soothing companion of their declining days. In fine, in your various situations, approve yourselves the devoted servants of Jesus. Thus living, and thus dying, ye shall be happy ; and thus living, and thus dying, ye shall be the Lord's. Amen.

ADDRESS IX.

I know that my Redeemer liveth.—JOB xix. 25.

SUCH was the language of Job's faith in the day of his distress. Though, to outward appearance, a spectacle of utter wretchedness, yet in this delightful consciousness, he was happy. His children were gone, his riches were lost, he was disfigured by corruption, and overwhelmed with sorrow; yet in the living Redeemer he finds hope to his soul. Friendless and desolate on earth, his refuge and portion were on high.

Jesus is a Redeemer. This is His name and His memorial to all generations, and it is a name 'which is as ointment poured forth.' This is a character which millions on earth and in heaven ascribe to Him. Though His religion hath lightened the sorrows of the prisoner, and improved the condition of oppressed nations, the title of a Redeemer leads us to consider Him as a Deliverer from the yoke of Satan, and from the bondage of corruption. For this redemption, His blood flowed, and His grace triumphs.

Your present appearance is a solemn profession that you are among the Lord's redeemed. But can you appeal to such evidence as this, as a proof that He is your Redeemer?—I was the prisoner of Satan, I was inclosed in a dungeon dark and frightful, my heart was the seat of enmity, and my soul was the victim of despair. But He cut the bars of iron in sunder, the gates of brass were broken by His hand, and His voice said to me, 'Go forth.' Now I resist Satan's dictates, and abhor all his works. Once I was the slave of evil passions, and I was hurried by them into many criminal excesses. Pride and impurity, envy and revenge, assumed in succession the rule of my heart; and while they promised me happiness, they rendered me of all men the most miserable. But 'the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, made me free from the law of sin and death,' and now I walk at liberty, under the influence of an ample charity, and an enlightened conscience. He hath said to me, in a voice which has awakened a gratitude that shall never die in my heart, and kindled an ardour in holiness, which no difficulties shall ever extinguish, 'Fear not, I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by My name; thou art Mine.'

But this Redeemer lives. How many deliverers, famed in history and song, now sleep the prisoners of the grave! How feeble is the idea, which the skill of the painter or the sculptor

can convey, of the lightning of that eye, which could rouse the timid to energy ; and of the might of that arm, which dragged oppressors from their thrones ! But the Redeemer of whom I speak, though He was once dead, is now alive for evermore. I know that He lives, from the hourly tokens of His care, and from His quickening influence on my drooping heart, for Christ lives in me. He ever lives to make intercession for us. Eternal beauty shines on His countenance, and everlasting mercy is the attribute of His heart. His is a life which knows no decay, and which ensures mine. ‘ Would to God that I could use this language ! ’ is perhaps a wish expressed by some hearts before me : ‘ but, alas ! the yoke of my transgressions is bound by His hand ; they are wreathed, and come up upon my neck ; He hath made my strength to fall ; the Lord hath delivered me into their hands, from whom I am not able to rise up.’ My soul cleaveth to the dust ; I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up. ‘ Lift up your heads with joy, for behold your redemption draweth nigh.’ The Redeemer is come into the world, nay, He is come to this table, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. He is come, that you might have life, and that you might have it more abundantly. Be silent, then, ye complaining souls, or rather break forth into singing, ‘ Hosannah to the Son of David. Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord to save us. Hosannah in the highest.’

‘ Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He hath visited and redeemed His people.’ ‘ In whom we have redemption through His blood.’ ‘ The Lord liveth, blessed be my Rock, and let the God of my salvation be exalted.’ Sing, O ye heavens, for ye are a purchased possession ; shout, ye lower parts of the earth ; on you the redemption was effected, and for your inhabitants it was obtained. Break forth into singing, ye young disciples, for the early visit His salvation has paid you. Lift up your voices, ye aged saints, for now is your complete salvation nearer than when you first believed. Bless the Lord, O my soul, who redeemeth thy life from destruction. Let my right hand forget its cunning, if it grasps another hope for eternity than that of the Gospel ; and let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if it ceases to praise Thee, O my Redeemer, and what Thou hast done.

Beware of everything that may mar your assurance. Think not that it will abide with you, whatever spirit you may cherish, and whatever course you may follow. Will His sun shine on

you while you slumber and sleep? Will He deck with beauty the crooked ways of apostacy? The fellowship of His Spirit will not follow you to the society of the licentious, nor will the comforts of His love mingle with the pleasures of sin. If you turn again to folly, dark clouds shall compass you, He will tear your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness, you shall feel His distracting terrors, and exclaim in the bitterness of your souls, 'My strength and my hope are perished from the Lord.' 'Be not high-minded, but fear.' Oh! do not, for your own sakes, I beseech you, as well as for His, do not the abominable thing which His soul hates. The immoral enthusiast may talk of his visions and raptures; but ye abhor the presumption of his spirit, and weep over a delusion, which causes the ways of God to be reproached.

By the circumspection, the zeal, and the modesty of true piety, your peace will be most effectually maintained. Truly, O Lord, I am Thy servant, I am Thy servant, and my whole life shall declare my devotedness to Thee. Thou hast loosed my bands, but I have taken Thy yoke upon me; and on earth and in heaven I will wear it as my glory.

Be not afraid of death. I say not that the fear of death is a proof that a person is a stranger to the grace of God, for 'Christ came to deliver them, who, through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage.' Some have a constitutional feebleness of spirit, and such an overwhelming sense of their transgressions, that the aspect of death, pale and ghastly, and his awful voice, 'Prepare to meet thy God!' strike terror into the heart. But your Redeemer lives, and 'your life is hid with Christ in God.' The grave shall not be a prison, but a peaceful habitation, and a quiet resting-place to you. Though to nature it seems a mansion cold, dark, and solitary, yet on it there is an inscription which makes the heart glad, the glory to rejoice, and the flesh to rest in hope: 'I will ransom thee from death, and from the power of the grave. O death, I will be thy plague; O grave, I will be thy destruction; repentance shall be hid from Mine eyes.' This blessed inscription remains clear and entire on the gravestones of the good, when time defaces the flatteries of grandeur, and crumbles into dust the marble on which they were recorded.

Have you lost the friends in whom you trusted? placed the desire of your eyes in her coffin? or laid the child of your hope in the grave? Ah! how my heart shrunk at the touch of that hand, whose grasp was the indication of confidence and affection, and at the sight of that ghastly face, whose features I so often saw illuminated with cheerfulness and love! But lift up

your eyes to the throne of the Prince of Life, and behold in that face and in these robes, a pledge that 'this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and that this mortal shall put on immortality.'

In fine, 'Ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God with your bodies, and with your spirits, which are His,' and let innocence guard and adorn every faculty of both. Let active goodness fill up with its labours every moment of your lives; and then, in your safety in death, and in your triumphant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of your Lord and Saviour, shall these words be realised: 'Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of Thine arm they shall be as still as a stone, till Thy people pass over, O Lord! till the people pass over whom Thou hast purchased.'

ADDRESS X.

Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us.—PSALM iv. 6.

Is this your wish, ye professed disciples of Jesus? It is not the wish of the multitude; their cry is, 'Who will show us any good?' But I trust each of you feels, though this prayer may rise from no lips and no heart on earth but mine, and though, on account of it, I should be laughed at as a fool, or reproached as an enthusiast, I will say, Let worldly men seek and find their portion where they please; my great wish, in which all others are absorbed, is this, 'God be merciful to me, and bless me, and cause His face to shine upon me.' But why is this your request, your earnest request? Because the loving-kindness of God is better than life; because without His favour I cannot be happy; and if God be for me, none can be against me. Without this, the smiles of the world, the favour of princes, and the affection of friends, could not satisfy me. But with this, I would be supremely blessed, though neglected by the world, and deserted by every friend.

How liberal and benevolent is the spirit of piety. While the saints wish for themselves the happiness that arises from the manifestations of the Divine glory, and from the gifts of His love, they solicit this for all their fellow-worshippers. The favourites of earthly princes are jealous of those whom they think likely to supplant them in the sovereign's heart, and do what they can to remove them, or to counteract their influence; but charity envieth not. If a sigh rises from the heart amid the delights of communion with God, it is prompted, not only

by the consciousness of unworthiness, but by the generous pity which feels for the soul in darkness. Amidst the kindest language of their Father's lips, the voice of sorrow reaches their ear, 'O that I knew where I might find Him!' The love which passeth knowledge terminates on millions, yet to none of them is Christ's affection feeble, and to none of them is His heart cold. The light of His countenance is like that of the sun, of which my share is not the less that it shines on multitudes.

Now, communicants, the veil is drawn aside. Yonder is your God clothed in majesty; yet from His face beams the softest lustre of love. 'To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at My word.' He has heard your prayer, 'I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory.' The Lord is descending in a cloud; but it is a bright white cloud. He passes not by you; He stands still and proclaims His name, while your hearts feel the gracious and delightful import of every title: 'The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin.' Never may these sounds forsake my ear. Behold, O my soul, the forgiveness which cancels all thy guilt, and the grace and the mercy which secure thy happiness for ever. Behold in this name thy Father's face, and thy Father's heart; and let thy whole soul exclaim, 'My Lord and my God.'

Reflect Christians, on the desertion of your Lord, and how sad He was, when deprived of that which makes you so happy. The language of the favoured communicant is, God is with me, and He has brought the joys of heaven with Him: That of the Saviour was, 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' Had it not been for this desertion, I should never have seen the face of God but in wrath, and all my comforts flow from my Saviour's sorrow.

How astonishing is it, that to His people God should address such language as this: 'Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may look upon thee. O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely!' What is Thy servant, O Lord, that Thou shouldest look on such a dead dog as I am? Behold, O God, our shield, and look on the face of Thine Anointed. O my God, I blush and am ashamed to lift up my face to Thee; I am sinking in the dust, under the con-

sciousness of my deformity and pollution. But never is the saint so lovely in the estimation of heaven, as when he covers his face with the wings of humility and reverence, abhors himself, and repents in dust and in ashes.

Divine manifestations have a transforming influence. 'We all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.' Like the rock which echoes back the sound, like the stream which reflects the sun that shines on it; so does the good man, in his temper and conduct, exhibit, though it is imperfectly, the excellencies displayed before him. All devout wishes after communion with God, are inseparably attended with strong desires after increase in holiness. 'Make Thy face to shine on Thy servant, and teach me Thy statutes.' Moral excellence is never dearer to the heart, than while it contemplates the glory of God, as it shines in the face of Jesus.

'Turn Thee unto me, and have mercy on me, for I am desolate and afflicted,' was David's cry from the dark retreat of solitude and sorrow. God may soon place you in a scene, no longer enlivened by the society and the smiles of those you love. But what is the wish of the good in such circumstances? It is not, O that Thou wouldest restore to me the friends Thou hast put far from me! O send them down from happiness, to terminate my sorrow! I cannot live without them. No, but I cannot live without Thee! O, when wilt Thou come unto me! In Thy countenance I shall read affection's kindest expression, and from Thy lips I shall hear the sweetest voice of love.

How soothing to the heart will be the light of God's countenance, when the face of a dying friend is gathering blackness! How sweet will it be, when God is changing your countenance, and sending you away! When you sorrow with regard to others, that you shall see their face no more; or they sorrow thus with regard to you; ye may rejoice in hope, 'that in your flesh you shall see God, whom you shall behold for yourselves, although your reins be consumed within you.' For you the communion of the blessed is destined; and for you, the marriage-supper of the Lamb is preparing. 'They shall see His face, and His name shall be written on their foreheads.' We dismiss you with the blessing of ancient Israel, and may you enjoy that presence and care of the Holy Trinity, which it so strikingly represents. The Lord bless thee, and keep thee. The Lord be gracious to thee, and cause His face to shine on thee. The Lord lift up His countenance on thee, and give thee peace. Amen.

ADDRESS XI.

I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels.—PSALM xxii. 14.

SUCH was the language in which ancient prophecy exhibited the sufferings of Christ; and it was realized in His bloody sweat in the garden, and in His bones starting from their places, when the cross was fixed in the ground, and when His body was suspended on it by nails driven through His feet and extended arms. Behold Him pouring out His soul unto death, and groaning under the wrath of His Father. At the anger of the Almighty, the mountains quake, the hills melt, and the earth is burnt up. But what is the quaking of the mountains, to the trembling of Christ's soul? What the dissolving of the hills, to the melting of His heart? And what the burning of the earth to the consuming of the Lamb of God?

But was all this tremendous suffering necessary? Yes, sin could have been expiated by no easier method. His blood must flow, and His heart must be broken. If Providence never demands from us one needless tear, it could not exact from our Surety more than was meet. A stream less copious could not have washed away our guilt, and a stroke less heavy could not have given that stream a sufficient vent from the rock that yields it. The wrath that melted His heart, and crushed Him to the dust of death, was that which would have sunk us to the lowest hell, and would have brought on us the vengeance of eternal fire.

Admire the love of Jesus in submitting with such patience, and such cheerfulness, to all this suffering. His heart welcomes all His agony, and His conduct displays, not merely acquiescence, but generous alacrity in the whole scene. Not a word nor a gesture indicated that His resolution was failing, or that His love was decayed. His deadly sorrow abated not His compassion for our miseries; and the death of the cross, in which the malice of His enemies went to its utmost pitch, was the brightest triumph of His love.

Was Christ poured out like water, and shall no tear of sorrow and love drop from our eyes? Did His heart melt, and shall ours be cold, and dead as a stone? Did His heart melt in the anguish of suffering, and shall not ours melt in penitence? O blessed Jesus, Thy melting heart reminds me of the hardness of mine! At Thy table, I present to Thee my earnest suppli-

cations for Thy softening grace. Precious in Thy sight are the meltings of pious sensibility. 'O that my head were waters, and mine eyes fountains of tears; that I might weep day and night,' for those sins for which Thy generous heart was wounded!

Ye angels of light, what were your feelings, when ye saw His garments rolled in blood, whose goodness sends rivers of pleasure through the land of glory? What were your feelings, when ye saw Him bruised, even by His hand who had given you this charge over Him, 'to keep Him in all His ways, and to bear Him up in your hands, lest He should dash His foot against a stone?' What are your feelings, when you see eyes weeping over the tale of fictitious sorrow, that never shed one tear over the Saviour's woes? What are your feelings, when you see indignation kindled against the oppressor of innocence in bosoms, where the sins are cherished which brought our Surety so low? Behold in these disciples of the cross, bowels yearning over a suffering Saviour; and mark how they are washing His feet with their tears!

From the generous Saviour who suffered thus for you, what may you not expect? Will the blessings of His love be withheld? No; 'I will pour water on the thirsty, and floods on the dry ground; My Spirit on thy seed, and My blessing on thine offspring.' Will He be cold and insensible to your sorrows? No; 'His heart is made of tenderness, His bowels melt with love.' The blessing may be delayed; but He shall come to you as the former and as the latter rain. God may speak roughly to you; but this will soon give place to such language as the following: 'How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I set thee as Admah, and make thee as Zeboim? My heart is turned within Me, and My repentings are kindled together.' 'For thee I delivered up My Son, and therefore thou art safe.'

Can you withhold aught from Him who gave up so much for you? Shall your hearts ever glow with impure desire? or your virtuous resolution melt at the flattering blandishments of sensual pleasure? Look to your Saviour's broken body, and learn to subject all the appetites of yours to the control of reason. Look to Him poured out like water, and learn to present your bodies, living sacrifices, holy and acceptable, which is your reasonable service. 'Look not at the wine when it is red, when it giveth its colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright; for in the end it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.' How shocking is it, to behold those who had gone to the altar of God, running to the excess of riot; and to hear

the whispers of envy, or language that wounds the ear of modesty, from those who have been listening to the Redeemer's wailings! Let your spirits be tender to the woes of others. When sorrow asks but the tribute of a tear, shall we refuse it? When it relates its moving tale, shall we shut up our bowels of compassion? Let it not be said, that the followers of Christ have grace always in their lips, but never in their hearts; that the disciples of a frigid philosophy have hands more open, and dispositions more soft, than those of the cross; and that those that come from her snow-clad mountains, are more active friends of the unhappy, than those that come from Calvary. Remember, for your encouragement to sympathy and beneficence, 'that the liberal soul shall be made fat; and that he that watereth, shall be watered also himself.' To such a man, no eye is dry in sorrow, and no heart is closed.

In fine, this lamentation of Christ suggests to good men, comfort in disease and death. When a consumptive sweat shall burst through every pore of thy body—when a burning fever drinks up thy spirits—when thou art chastened in thy bones—and when thy heart and thy flesh fail, think of Him who was poured out like water, whose strength was dried like a potsherd, who endured extremity of pain, and who, though crucified in weakness, lives by the power of God. He knows the weight and the bitterness of affliction, and with entire confidence you may go to Him, who has felt the pangs of sorrow and the agonies of death. You may trust the assurance, that in all your affliction He will be afflicted; and that in your last struggle He will bear a part. 'We must needs die, and be as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered again.' 'Your hearts shall moulder into dust; corruption shall disunite the bones so wonderfully joined together, and scatter them about the grave's mouth; but lift up your eyes to heaven, and behold in Christ's glorified body and triumphing spirit, what the good shall be at the time of the restitution of all things. Bones that never ache, a heart that never sighs, and eyes that weep no more, shall be theirs. 'There shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.'

ADDRESS XII.

Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire : mine ears hast Thou opened : burnt-offering and sin-offering hast Thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come : in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O My God : yea, Thy law is within My heart.—PSALM xl. 6-8.

SACRIFICES were originally of Divine institution, and were intended to answer the most important purposes. The sinner was taught by them the malignity and the desert of his sin, and they directed his views to that great oblation which, in the fulness of time, should for ever perfect them that are sanctified. Often had conscious guilt trembled, and faith lifted up its head by their side, and the fire descending from heaven and consuming the victim, showed that the offering was accepted, and that the contrite spirit might hope in God. But the period was now come when the blood of bullocks, of lambs, and of goats, should cease to flow from His altar, and when every eye should be turned from the temple and its rites, to the cross on Calvary. Long had Jehovah beheld them with abhorrence substituted in the place of devout affection and of the moral virtues, and abused, to encourage the hope of impunity in sin ; but now the anger of the Lord was to burst forth against these hypocrites in the subversion of their civil and religious institutions, and the Messiah was to appear to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself ; and to present an offering which, while it established the hope of forgiveness, should exhibit the most engaging pattern of piety and love, of meekness and constancy in suffering, whose influence should be felt in all the scenes of time, and whose efficacy should be extolled through all the ages of eternity. Jesus, knowing that such were the views and plans of His Father, and glorying in being chosen and called by Him to offer such a sacrifice, says, ' Mine ears hast Thou opened.' Like the Jewish servants, He took such delight in His Master's work, that He pledges Himself never to lay aside the form of a servant till He had accomplished the task assigned Him. The Jewish servant who loved his master, and would not go out free, had only one ear bored, because he had only to labour for him, and was to be subjected to no suffering ; but Jesus had to endure the penalty, as well as to obey the precept of the law. This was necessary to fulfil all righteousness, as well as to complete the redemption of His people. There was nought in all its curses that could extinguish, or even check His generous ardour, nor was there one

of its precepts which He counted it irksome or degrading for Him to obey.

Having said to His Father, 'Here am I, send Me,' this accepted pledge Jesus was willing to redeem. 'Then said I, lo, I come.' This language points out the promptitude and seasonableness of His interposition for man. It was not postponed for a single instant beyond the destined period, and never did He discover the least symptom of hesitation. He came when long experience had demonstrated the utter insufficiency of every other oblation and of every other hope, when superstition had ransacked all its stores for a suitable victim, and when philosophy had laboured in vain to devise an effectual expedient to dispel the guilty fears of man, and to renovate the moral and religious character of society. Jesus came, and no other; for no other was equal to the task. Of all the myriads of angels, there was none that attempted it. We find not in Scripture the least intimation of any effort they ever made for the relief of those who were once their companions, and what they could not do for them, they could not accomplish for man. Jesus speaks as if He wished all the angels in heaven to mark His cheerful obedience to confirm them in subjection to God, and because in His coming there is matter for everlasting wonder. Be astonished, my soul, that He should come when so few were disposed to welcome Him, and on a service so arduous and so painful. Rejoice, ye compassionate angels, He cries, who are sighing over the miseries of wretched mortals, I come to redeem the lost; and we cannot hear Him utter this language without saying, 'Hosanna to the Son of David, blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord to save us.'

The Messiah declares, 'In the volume of the book it is written of Me,' 'I know all the predictions it has uttered, and I am come to fulfil them; all the hopes it has inspired, and I will now realise them; and all the sufferings it has marked out for Me, and I will endure them.' He was willing not merely to assume its bright characters of a Prince and a Conqueror, but even the humblest of its titles; and submitted with cheerfulness to the task of a servant, and to the pangs of a sufferer. To be, and do, and suffer, what prophecy had marked out and love anticipated, was His highest wish. He delighted to do God's will, and this pleasure was felt not merely in the distant prospect of obedience, but when He was actually engaged in it, and in the midst of His severest toils and dying agonies. How affectionate is the claim which He makes, 'O My God!' and much did this tend to animate every exertion, and to alle-

viate all His pains. It was thus that He obtained for you the privilege of employing the language of appropriating faith, and taught us that the most acceptable season in which this can be made is when the heart is animated by holy zeal, and we are most active in our appointed duties. He adds, 'And Thy law is within My heart.' Nothing could make Him swerve from it, or keep it for a single moment from His view. In His soul there were no evil principles to oppose it, every affection accorded with its dictates, and its rectitude had the fullest approbation of His judgment, and the highest complacency of His heart. Can you say, in His spirit, 'O how love I Thy law!' Yea, even the curse of the law entered into His soul in all the wrath which you deserved; and to this He was willing to submit to redeem you from it. I trust, Christians, that you now feel a glowing impression of your Saviour's grace. O magnify His name for what He undertook, and for what He did for you; and while you observe His dying command, may He seal this covenant with you, 'I will put My laws in their minds, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people.'

Be grateful, Christians, for the generous love of your Saviour. It is common with men, when other means of relieving the wretched have been found vain, to say, 'It is idle for me to attempt it;' but the insufficiency of other methods of saving us, led to the expression of His determination to accomplish the mighty task, in which He shall shine with unrivalled glory for ever. Had He been coming to an admiring world, and to universal sway, His promptitude would not have been so surprising; but He came to all the gloom of sorrow, and to all the bitterness of death, and to redeem those who deserved no pity, and who are insensible of what they owe to Him till His grace makes them feel it. Beware of every false hope. If those ancient oblations were rejected as utterly insufficient to expiate the least sin, none of your sufferings or services can merit aught at the hand of God. You have now laid all your attainments at the Saviour's feet, but take heed lest, when the swell of devotional feeling has subsided, you be induced to put confidence in your own acquirements. Live in those humble impressions of your own character and conduct, which the contemplation of the cross awakens, and in which, from the bed of death, you will view the throne of judgment rising before you. Remember the assurances of fidelity you have now given to your Lord; He has drawn you to Himself with the cords of love, and let there not be among you one backslider in heart. He

died in your cause, and you should die in His service. Jesus is a Master who bears to His servants all a father's love, and 'His yoke is easy, and His burden is light.' When He requires of you any service, you must engage in it with alacrity; when He imposes any cross, you must glory in tribulation; when He demands any of your comforts, your grasp must be instantly unloosed; and when He calls you to heaven, you must not permit any worldly interest to retard you, nor any of the terrors of death to influence you to shrink.

Be well acquainted with all that is said in the volume of His book respecting your Lord. If the minutest particulars in the lives of those whose exploits, or whose crimes, have made them famous in the world, are recorded with care, and read with attention, you can never feel indifferent to aught that God hath made known respecting Him who is the brightness of His glory. Every sacramental solemnity should increase your knowledge of the glories of His cross, and every affliction you experience of the fellowship of His sufferings. In looking into these things, you mingle in the studies of angels. Let it be your delight to do the will of God, and never let your countenance, your manner, or your language, indicate that you deem any of His commandments grievous. See how the dutiful and affectionate child delights to fulfil a father's pleasure, and what a happiness it feels in receiving his commands, and think how the will of God is done in heaven. The angels would be ashamed to have one cold feeling, or one unoccupied moment; and it must be with surprise and horror that they witness our lukewarmness and indolence. Reflect on your Master's holy ardour, and pray for an increasing measure of it. When the sluggard tells you how agreeable the rest of indolence is, and when the wicked boast that they never were happy till they had shaken off the restraints of religion, consider that their satisfactions will soon end in remorse and torture, and that the joy of the Lord is your strength. The only grief of a good man in duty is, that he cannot perform it better.

And let God's law be within your hearts in the strong affection which you bear to it, and in the subjection of all your thoughts and feelings to its influence. Let your wishes, your recollections, and purposes, be as fully regulated by its dictates, as the most open actions of your lives. The law of God in your heart will keep the world from its throne, and sin from having dominion over you. Let not the senseless jargon in which some inconsiderate zealots for the doctrines of grace disparage good works, lead you to imagine that the Gospel has abrogated the moral law, or generates any hostility to it. It never

can pass away, and a good man cannot desire its subversion. It is the rule of duty on earth, the standard of perfection in heaven, and the transcript of Jehovah's moral excellence. It is magnified in all Christ's offices, it is the inseparable associate of the Gospel, and it will be the test in our final judgment.

ADDRESS XIII.

The redemption of their soul is precious.—PSALM xlix. 8.

How great is the value of the soul to be redeemed ! Its capacities are noble. It is immortal ; and on its redemption it depends whether it shall be happy or miserable for ever. The redemption of a nation from a tyrant's yoke, is deemed a great event. Genius in its sublimest strains, and art in its costliest monuments, transmit the memory of it to distant ages ; but the salvation of one soul from hell, is a deliverance of infinitely higher importance. 'What is a man profited though he should gain the whole world, if he lose his own soul ? and what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ?'

'The redemption of the soul is precious ;' for nought that the universe could offer, would be accepted of as a price for it. The cattle upon a thousand hills would have bled, and the gold of a thousand treasuries would have been piled up, in vain. The blood of God's Son was its only price ; and for the soul's redemption that blood was shed. On Calvary this ransom was paid ; and in the salvation of the penitent malefactor, a pledge of its acceptance was given. 'God gave Egypt for His people's ransom of old, Ethiopia and Seba for them, because they were precious in His sight and honourable ;' but in the redemption of man from sin, 'no mention shall be made of the gold of Sheba, the topaz of Ethiopia, or the fine linen of Egypt ;' the sacrifice of His Son was alone sufficient for the mighty object.

'The redemption of the soul is precious ;' for in it the most important blessings are comprehended. From every pang to which they were liable, the elect of God are saved ; and to every enjoyment to which they can rise through eternity, they have a title. The robes of glory are washed in the Redeemer's blood ; and the crowns of life are placed by His hand. It is the ransomed of the Lord, who obtain joy and gladness ; and it is at the Redeemer's mandate, that 'sorrow and sighing flee away.' From His everlasting merits flow their everlasting joys.

‘The redemption of the soul is precious:’ for the noblest agents are employed about it. Contemplate, O Christian, redemption, in the mercy, the purpose, and the appointment of the Father, the love, the obedience, and the sufferings of the Son, and in the promise and grace of the Spirit, and say if that can be a matter of trivial moment, in which such agents concur? O! astonishing redemption, in which I see the Father in His manifold wisdom, Jesus in love that passeth knowledge, and the Spirit in grace which defies all the power of hell to resist it, or to make it void. I might, in proof that ‘the redemption of the soul is precious,’ appeal to the groans of the lost, doomed never to share it; and to the songs of the blessed, who can find no strains too high to celebrate a Redeemer’s worth, and the glory of salvation. Every era of the world hath its objects to applaud, and to cast into the shade the brilliant deeds of former generations; but the redemption of the soul shines with unfading lustre from age to age; and when the records of human glory shall have perished utterly, it will fill heaven with its wonders, immortals with its bliss, and eternity with its praise.

What think ye, Christians, of the redemption of the soul? To me it is so precious, that it gratifies all my wishes. To me it is so precious, that without it the universe could not make me happy. To me it is so precious, that I will magnify it for ever.

‘O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, and His mercy endureth for ever. Who remembered you in your low estate, for His mercy endureth for ever. And redeemed you from the hand of your enemies, for His mercy endureth for ever.’ What wondrous love shines in that declaration of the Father, ‘I will give Thee for salvation to the ends of the earth!’ Let all that is within you be stirred up to bless the precious Saviour, who gave Himself a ransom for all. What would have been our fate, had He been as reluctant to undertake the office of redeeming us, as Moses was to redeem Israel? Did He raise a single objection? Or did He yield His consent in a manner sullen and slow? He went with alacrity to the scene where He was to redeem, and there He stood. The pit sent forth its most malignant vapours to destroy Him; the wrath of God was revealed from heaven against Him; yet He failed not, till the prey was taken from the mighty, and the lawful captive was delivered.

Let the melting remembrance of redeeming love accompany you wherever you go, as the animating principle of every duty,

and as a monitor to patience under every trial. Think of it when your soul becomes languid, in seasons when apostacy is frequent, amid the sleepless nights of pain, the bitter reflections of disappointment, and the base requitals of the ungrateful. Hath Christ done so much to redeem your souls from all iniquity, and will He see you defiling them with indifference? He expects that they shall be purified by faith, and elevated by devotion, guarded by temperance, and expanded by charity. The path of improvement in wisdom and goodness is now before you. In every step it will open new glories to the eye, and in all its windings the cross of your Lord is to be seen. With this in your view, can you turn aside to folly? To His dying shout, 'It is finished,' your hearts reply, let us go on to perfection. In this redemption, seek your happiness in all circumstances. By faith in it, contentment will sing in poverty, joy will exult in solitude, and hope will triumph by the grave where sleep the chosen of our hearts, and where we ourselves will see corruption. 'Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.' When visitors, in language cautious and reluctant, and when the face of friendship in despair, shall tell you there is no hope of deliverance to your failing flesh, ye shall rejoice in the Redeemer of your souls. Redemption stamps a value upon the vile body, and shall raise it from the worms to fashion it like to Christ's glorious body. In a short time ye shall join the happy society above, who are celebrating the honours of redemption in a sublimer manner than we can do here. 'They sing a new song, saying, Thou art worthy, for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.' Redemption will gather its trophies from every country under heaven; and, in the wonderful varieties in the mode of its application, will display the power, the skill, and the patience of its Author. I do not say that redemption will occupy only the noblest songs of heaven. There are none there of which it is not the theme, and in which it is not the first and the last. Now, Christians, we dismiss you by applying to you the blessing of Joseph by Moses! 'Blessed of the Lord be his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath, and for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon, and for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills, and for the precious things of the earth and fulness thereof, and for the good will of Him who dwelt in the bush.' Blessed of the Lord be your souls; by the purifying influences of Christ's

blood; by the comforts of the promises; by grace and its victories; by the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the praise and glory of God; by the doctrines and ordinances of the Church, by the produce of Immanuel's land, and by the good will of Him whose abode is in the contrite heart. Redeeming love comprehends all these in its designs; redeeming blood contains them all in its purchase; and to these the hopes of the redeemed may aspire. 'Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption; and He shall redeem Israel from all His iniquities.'

ADDRESS XIV.

Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.—PSALM lxxxv. 10.

THOUGH these words may be applied to the conduct of Jehovah to the Jews after the captivity in Babylon, when He had glorified His justice in their sufferings, and was now manifesting His former loving-kindness, it is obvious from the loftiness and energy of the passage, that the Psalmist's mind was directed to a scene incomparably more grand and interesting. He anticipates the redemption of man from sin and wrath; and the wondrous display of mercy and justice, truth and peace, in that stupendous transaction, in united lustre and perfect harmony. To such meditations you are now called, and may you pursue them under the guidance of the Spirit of wisdom and piety.

In the study of the Divine excellencies a pious mind finds its purest and sublimest enjoyment; the Bible furnishes us with ample assistance in it, and opens our way through difficulties in which reason would have been lost in perplexity. In viewing the Divine character man cannot avoid considering it in reference to his own, and has often felt the most painful anxieties as to the manner in which Jehovah would act to him as a sinner. While the goodness spread over the creation might excite a feeble hope of mercy, the judgments which God executes on the guilty were adapted to repress that hope, and to awaken in the mind the most awful forebodings. How delightful is it to hear that justice hath obtained satisfaction to all its claims on us, and that Jehovah can, without the least prejudice to His truth, 'show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness to us through our Lord Jesus Christ.'

In the state and circumstances of men, there was somewhat which called for the exercise of various attributes. Man is a sinner, and justice pleads that the wages of sin is death; and truth urges the threatening that 'the soul that sinneth shall die.' But man is unhappy at present, and if this threatening is executed, he must be still more miserable; and at the view of wretchedness so dreadful and so hopeless, the bowels of mercy were troubled. That compassion which hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked, longed for the return of the offender; but how his guilt could be expiated, or his repentance accepted, no wisdom but that of an infinite understanding could determine. History records various instances of painful perplexities into which judges and kings have been thrown, by the circumstances which called for the punishment of a criminal, and those which pleaded with them to spare him, and the expedients to which they have had recourse to reconcile the exercise of clemency with the honour of the law, and the safety of the community. In these we behold pity struggling with principles stern and unyielding, the one viewing the criminal as an unhappy being of the same blood with ourselves, the other as an offender richly meriting an awful doom; yet this can give us no adequate idea of the light in which man appeared to the great God, as a creature and as a sinner; though in the Divine mind there never could be hesitation or uncertainty as to the course to be pursued.

But could created wisdom discover no method for reconciling these claims? Some have imagined that God might pardon sinners from the abundance of His grace without regarding the demands of justice; and have stated that if it is the glory of a man to pass by a transgression, it is impious to deny this to the Supreme Being. But how absurd is it to make the conduct of a private individual liable to error, a model for the procedure of the King Eternal! To act in this manner would make the claims of His law nugatory, encourage the rebellion of His subjects, expunge from His name its most splendid titles, and tarnish His glory as the just Governor of the world. The sages of the heathen world had their attention turned to this subject for ages, yet after all their speculations, the question was asked with as much anxiety as ever, 'Wherewith shall I come before the Lord?' As for the schemes of modern infidels, with whatever confidence they are brought forward, they are equally offensive to the enlightened mind, and as unsatisfactory to the trembling heart. Oh! that man, conscious of his own inability to devise a method, or to make an effort for his own redemption, would welcome that revelation which

discloses the manifold wisdom of God, and which causes hope to shine in the scene of despair, and salvation to bless where all was lost.

Rejoice, Christians, that in the mediation of your Saviour these attributes are glorified. In His sufferings the justice of God is fully vindicated, and obtains satisfaction to all its claims in a victim so noble and so voluntary. Rather than God's law should be degraded, His only begotten Son descends to answer its claims; and not the least abatement is either solicited or made. While justice continues to punish the transgressor, we are certain its demands are unanswered; but when the sword of Jehovah returned to its scabbard, and our Surety 'was taken from prison and from judgment,' we know that 'the Lord is well pleased for His righteousness' sake,' and that 'He hath magnified the law and made it honourable.' Truth found in the Surety all its threats executed, and all its pledges redeemed. All the wrath denounced against the vessels of mercy was inflicted on this Sufferer, and all the prefigurations of redemption were completely realized. Mercy now flows without restraint. It is gratified in the bestowal of the best gift of heaven; it relieves where it pitied, and saves what was lost. If the pleasure of the good in acts of mercy, and the lustre of their beneficence are heightened in proportion to the severity of the distress relieved, what must be the delight of the Father of mercies, and what the glory of His compassion, in delivering millions from the lowest hell! Mercy, like the good father, welcomes the returning prodigal; and to those who state his follies as a reason why no favour should be shown to him, it can make this answer, 'Let us rejoice and be glad, for this my son was dead and is alive again, he was lost and is found.'

Peace reconciles the world. Its overtures of reconciliation can now be made to the sinner, and the olive branch taken from the cross is lifted up among the nations. The rainbow appears in the clouds the symbol of peace, and the pledge of safety; and the trembling sinner is assured that 'God is just, while He justifies the ungodly who believe in Jesus.'

You are now, I trust, adoring the wisdom of God which shines in this harmony. In this scheme of redemption you see what God alone could contrive, and in this work what God alone could accomplish. Let it be your prayer with Moses, 'I beseech Thee show me Thy glory;' and at the communion table may He do for you what He did for him while he abode in the cleft of the rock. He now proclaims His name, 'The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and

sin, keeping mercy for thousands, and that will by no means clear the guilty.' You hear that name proclaimed with those mingled feelings of reverence and love, of pious confidence and holy awe which it demands ; for you know that the vengeance which it threatens was inflicted on your Surety, and that the mercy which it displays will reign to your eternal life. 'We adore, O God, the justice and the judgment which are the habitation of Thy throne, while we rejoice in the mercy and the truth which go before Thy face.'

Rejoice, Christians, that the harmony which has been thus established shall never be interrupted. We often find that when the opposite claims of men at variance have been adjusted, and a reconciliation established, which it is hoped will be permanent, some occurrence renews the hostility, and renders all that was done before unavailing. But there was nothing which had a tendency to mar this harmony which was not foreseen by Jehovah, and which He could not control and overrule. No caprice can make Him dissatisfied with this arrangement, for He is of one mind, and who can turn Him ? What can justice demand after such precious blood, or mercy ask in addition to so great a salvation ? The sins into which good men fall cannot subvert this harmony, for it is impossible for them, with their principles and habits, to live under the power of iniquity. 'He that is born of God sinneth not ;' he doth not sin habitually, for His seed remaineth in him. Mercy will for ever rejoice in the happiness of those for whose misery her soul was grieved ; justice in the salvation of those who are made the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus ; peace in the friendship that is sealed by the blood of the everlasting covenant, and truth in the homage which experience will thus address to her : 'We know with all our heart, and with all our soul, that not one good thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord our God hath spoken concerning us.'

In this harmony the other attributes of God are exhibited in their brightest glory. The sovereignty of God is most apparent in it, for no such meeting took place after the ruin of angels. Peace took not a single step to bring back those exiles from outer darkness ; nor did mercy ever heave one sigh over their wretchedness. And it is only for some of our race that mercy struggled, and for some of them only that justice is satisfied. It exhibits Jehovah also as wonderful in counsel : and this is surely the language of your hearts in contemplating this scene, 'How excellent is Thy loving kindness, O God.' Man's happiness springs from the Saviour's agony, and by the

most atrocious crime that ever was committed, the expiation of sin is effected. As to the holiness of God, it is most evident in the motives which this scene presents to avoid what is evil, and to follow what is good, and which rouse in the highest degree our gratitude and fear.

Trust, Christians, in these perfections of your God. His justice will deny you nothing which Jesus hath purchased for you, and He will show that He delights in mercy, by exceeding all your wishes. In every dark dispensation you must believe that His paths are mercy and truth. 'Although thou sayest thou dost not see Him, yet judgment is before Him, therefore trust thou in Him.' Whatever charges are brought against you, and at whatever bar you may be called to stand, this is your comfort, 'It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again.' In all the perplexities of your lot, the wisdom of God will direct you; and he that walketh uprightly, walketh surely. When opposite claims are made on you, and when opposite courses are suggested to you, He will lead you in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. He will make you find advantage to your soul in outward misfortune, pleasure in weeping for sin, respect in humility, spiritual vigour in dying daily, communion in solitude, and usefulness on earth in a conversation in heaven. 'I will lead the blind in ways they know not, and in paths they have not trode; I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight.' When your hearts are overwhelmed with perplexity, you see to what Counsellor you can apply for direction; and while He brands with folly the wisdom of the world, He can make the heart of the simple to understand knowledge, and ordain strength from the mouth of babes. Let the views you have now taken confirm your faith in your religion, and strengthen your attachment to it. It is the only system which shows these perfections in harmony in Jehovah's conduct to sinners. The enemies of the Gospel can find no way of avoiding the difficulty but by denying the punitive justice of God, and palliating the malignity of sin, as if man could be saved to God's dishonour; but ye know, that while man is saved, Jehovah is glorified in the highest. 'Sing, O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it; shout, ye lower parts of the earth, break forth into singing, ye mountains, and forests, and every tree that is therein, for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified Himself in Israel.'

Let the justice of God be honoured by you as well as His mercy. God has glorified it in the agonies and the blood of His own Son, and He calls on you to contemplate it with

reverence and adoration. You may study its most tremendous threatenings, and mark its most destructive displays without slavish dread. While these are hateful to the wicked, ye can glory in them; and you cannot cherish the wish that one of these denunciations had been suppressed, or that one of these judgments had not been executed. The sceptre of righteousness is stretched out, that you may touch it in humble confidence, and adore Him as a just God and a Saviour.

Let these excellencies be united in your temper and conduct. It is this union which forms the peculiar beauty of the Christian character. Mercy will soften the sternness of justice, and justice will keep mercy from giving away that to which others may have a claim, and preserve it from that indiscriminate indulgence by which indolence and vice are encouraged. Our Lord places judgment, mercy, and fidelity together, and represents them as the weightier matters of the law. Be willing to make sacrifices to maintain peace, and to restore it where it hath been broken, and be faithful to your vows to God, and to your promises to men. How opposite is the character of him who swears to his own hurt and changeth not, to that of him who violates his promises in every fit of caprice, in every change of circumstances, and at every suggestion of advisers.

Finally, Endeavour to persuade all to whom you have access, to comply with this method of salvation, and point out to them, for this purpose, what an aggravation it will be to their misery, that all the movements of mercy could not soften them, that they would not be awed by all the terrors of justice, nor won by all the overtures of peace. When I turn my eyes from your happy condition, to whose eternal life grace is reigning through righteousness, and contemplate the vessels of wrath fitting themselves for destruction, the thought strikes me, Perhaps peace is now addressing to them its last invitation, and mercy is shedding over them its last tear. May the disobedient be turned to the wisdom of the just, and may the injurious obtain salvation; and may you, ye disciples of Jesus, know in your happy experience, that 'the mercy of the Lord is to everlasting on them that fear Him, and His righteousness to their children's children, even to such as keep His covenant, and obey His commandments.

ADDRESS XV.

How precious are Thy thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand; when I awake, I am still with Thee.—PSALM cxxxix. 17, 18.

IF Jehovah's purposes, with respect to David's creation, his deliverance from his enemies, and the stability and glory of his throne, were so precious to his heart, how highly would not he value the counsels of his God, with regard to his everlasting salvation! Inexpressibly dear are these counsels to every pious mind. Precious to the affectionate heart are the thoughts of friendship; but they may pass into neglect, contempt, and enmity. Precious to the ambitious man are the kind intentions of his prince; but his 'breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth, in that very day his thoughts perish.' But, with respect to Jehovah's thoughts, infinite love suggests them, unerring wisdom directs them, absolute immutability establishes them, and almighty power carries them into execution. Precious are these thoughts to angels, for they are the objects of their study; and shall they not be dear to me? Precious to me, O God, is the word that reveals these thoughts, the faith that relies on them, and the sacraments by which they are sealed. Precious to me are these thoughts, for in reflecting on them, my happiest hours are spent. Precious to me are these thoughts, for they are the consolation of poverty to me: 'I am poor and needy, but the Lord thinketh on me.' Precious are they to me, for they suggest the hope that animates me in the most painful services: 'Think on me, O my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people.' They are precious to me, for they gladden me when sleep departs from mine eyes; and when others, in such circumstances, are tormented by the phantoms of superstition, or are occupied with the visions of pleasure or ambition, 'my soul is filled as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth praises Thee with joyful lips, when I remember Thee on my bed, and meditate on Thee in the night watches.' Precious are these thoughts to me; for the morning light awakens me to reflect on them, and lends me its wings to soar after Thee. Precious are Thy thoughts to me; for, engrossed with them, I feel no dreariness in solitude, and no terror in its loneliest wilds. Precious are they to me; for, amid the most pleasing intercourse of social life, my soul rises to Thee as its chief joy; and while others around

me are occupied in inquiring into the intrigues of statesmen, the plans of warriors, and the projects of men of business, I would rather spend one hour in affectionate adoration of the scheme of mercy, than be endowed with all the wisdom of the world. Precious, O God, to me are Thy thoughts; for, when death comes, this shall be my prayer, 'Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom!' I have laid up Thy kind assurance as the consolation of my death-bed: 'I know the thoughts which I think on you, saith the Lord; thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.' This shall encourage me to approach to Thee, however dark and solitary the path may be. Precious are Thy counsels to me; for I wish to spend eternity in their praise. Their depth shall be my wonder, their grace my song, and their fruits my happiness in heaven.

Have I expressed, Christians, the sentiments and the feelings of your hearts? 'Lord, what is man, that Thou art mindful of him?' Lord, what am I, that Thou art mindful of me? Is the painful consciousness of your unworthiness mingling with the raptures of devout astonishment? Recollect, that though God be high, He hath respect to the lowly, and that those joys are most pleasing to God, and yield the most lasting bliss to the heart, which are guarded by humbleness of mind. The Lord delights to see the tear of penitence in the eye that is gazing with holy wonder. Remember that it is in Christ that He regards you, and that it is for His merits that He takes such account of you. Are you happy that this is the case? Yes, it is my living, and shall be my dying wish, 'that I may win Christ, and be found in Him.'

Can you say, Christians, with such pledges of love divine in your hands, 'The Lord hath forsaken me, and my God hath forgotten me? Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, she may forget, but I will not forget thee; I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands,' and the cross of My Son must be forgotten ere I forget thee. Fix your eyes on the broken body, and the shed blood of His Son, and you will exclaim, 'We have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him!' Far from you be the insolence that charges God foolishly, the despondency which looks only to the dark side of objects and events, the fear that says, 'I shall no more see good.' Cultivate the humility which says, 'I know, O Lord, that Thy judgments are right, and that in faithfulness

Thou hast afflicted me !'—the faith that penetrates through the dark cloud, and the hope which rejoices that all shall be well.

Let the piety of your hearts form purposes for the advancement of your Saviour's glory. Such is the condescension and grace of God, that the good thoughts of His people, which are not carried into execution, shall not be unnoticed nor unrewarded. The pang which wrings the heart at the remembrance of sin, that says, O that I could recal the period when I yielded to temptation, that I might repel it with the energy of virtuous abhorrence; the glow which is kindled in the soul at the thought of Christ's love, and in which it consecrates its best possessions to His service; and the pity that sighs over human wretchedness, and would glory to carry the peace of religion to the house of mourning, and the light of salvation to the land of darkness, are known to Him who searches all hearts, and understands all the imaginations of the thoughts. From Him they shall receive a gracious acknowledgment, who said to David, 'It is good that it was in thine heart to build a house to My name.' 'If there be a willing mind, it is accepted.' It is not the man who dispersed abroad that shall be alone accounted charitable, nor shall he who built synagogues be alone deemed zealous for the Lord. For they shall be accepted who had the desire, though not the means, of performing these acts of piety and beneficence.

Cultivate thoughts of peace and kindness to each other. Thoughts of peace are God's happiness; let them be yours also. Angry and malignant passions raise a tempest in the soul; and who that hath seen happiness shaken and ruined by their fury, would wish to call them forth? But benevolence and charity are sweet as the sunshine, and refreshing as the falling dew. 'Let not thine heart envy sinners, but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long, for surely there is an end, and thine expectation shall not be cut off.' Their gourd is flourishing for the worm, and their glory is hastening to the land of forgetfulness.

We address to you the charge given to Daniel: 'Go thy way till the end be, for thou shalt rest and stand in thy lot at the end of the days;' he that endureth to the end, and he only, shall be saved. Ye shall soon reach the city of habitations; and then the wanderings of the wilderness, its solitude, its tempests, and its privations, shall be forgotten; or remembered to make the communion of the heavenly Jerusalem, its perpetual sunshine, and its fulness of joy, the more enrapturing. When Joseph's two sons were presented to his father, the old man said, 'I had not thought to see thy face, and lo God hath

showed me thy seed.' Similar to his will be the feelings of good men in heaven. I often thought it very doubtful if ever I should arrive at paradise, but Thou hast brought me to a glory and to a happiness, which it never entered into my heart to conceive. I thought I would be blessed indeed, if but admitted within its gates, and in the portion adjudged to one who was less than the least of all saints; but Thou hast set me among the princes of the people, and from the threshold where I wished to kneel, Thou hast called me to Thy throne. 'Thy thoughts are not as My thoughts, nor thy ways as Mine.' Let pious contemplation be associated with active goodness. 'Wherefore, gird up the loins of your minds, and be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that shall be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.'

ADDRESS XVI.

We will remember Thy love more than wine.—Song i. 4.

IN these words the Church expresses her delight in communion with Christ, and her determination to remember His love more than the sweetest and most valued of created enjoyments. Such is the purpose of every devout communicant, and nothing can be more reasonable than this preference. It may serve to confirm you in this pious resolution, and to strengthen your religious affections, to point out to you that no earthly good deserves to occupy the same place with the love of Christ, in the recollections of your memory, the estimation of your minds, and the delight of your hearts.

It is the love of Christ which gives to earthly comforts all their sweetness. The worldly man delights in them from the gratification which they yield to his appetites and passions; and such is his caprice, and so unsatisfactory does he find them, that he quickly turns with disgust from that which he sought with eagerness. But it is the love of Christ enjoyed in these, which makes the pious experience, in the meanest dwelling and with the scantiest fare, more delight than the wicked have in the highest prosperity. Could this ingredient be extracted from their comforts, they would feel themselves wretched, though feasted at the table, and clothed from the wardrobe of princes. That love of Jesus which gives verdure to the palms, and splendour to the crowns on high, sweetens the righteous man's morsel, and blesses his gains. Acknowledge to Him at His table, how much He hath done to make you happy on earth, as well as in heaven.

He has rendered you grateful and contented in circumstances where others, uninfluenced by religion, would have exhibited the worst excesses of impatience. It is thus that He preserves you from envying the superior advantages of others, and proves by your happiness in the humblest condition, that 'a little that a righteous man hath, is better than the riches of many wicked.'

The love of Christ can make the pious happy in the want of these comforts. Worldly men, when reduced to poverty, or bereft of friends, or brought by disease to the brink of the grave, abandon themselves to despondency, but in these circumstances, the saints feel that their happiness is safe, and that their chief good is untouched. The prophet could rejoice in the God of his salvation, though every cluster was gone from the vineyard, every stalk from the field, and every sheep from the pastures. Behold the primitive Christians suffering the sorest calamities: persecution prepares for them the instruments of death, famine sweeps away their stores with the besom of destruction, and disease chastens them with strong pain, yet in all things they were more than conquerors, through Him that loved them. They are represented not merely as supporting and surviving the shock of such united calamities, but as unhurt by their fury, defying their power, and triumphing gloriously over them all. The love of Christ can bring the peace of heaven into the worst troubles of the world, can cheer when earthly joys are failing, and bless when they perish.

Let your devout acknowledgments be now made to your Saviour, who in situations where your happiness was supposed to be ruined, kept it uninjured, and who, when you were deprived of that from which you had derived much consolation, fulfilled his kind assurance, 'I will not leave you comfortless, I will come unto you;' and let this preserve you from disquieting fears as to the future, for 'My God shall supply all your need, according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.'

The love of Christ can and does yield much better comforts than any of an earthly kind. A worldly man has no idea of a happiness superior to what the world yields him, and for no other has he a relish. He sometimes boasts that he is too rational to be puffed up with the deceits of enthusiasm, and that he cares for no happiness but what gratifies his senses; but ye have been renewed in the spirit of your mind, and you know that there are better blessings than the world can bestow. Ye know that no earthly enjoyment can be compared with the hidden manna, and the wine of the kingdom. It is on the image of your Saviour, the favour of your God, and the grace of His

Spirit, that your hearts are set, and to minds occupied with these, the joys and honours of the world seem empty and grovelling. Your love abounds in all knowledge and judgment, and you have been taught to approve the things that are more excellent; and were Jesus now to say to you, 'Ask what I shall give you,' you would not solicit riches, or honour, or long life, or vengeance on your enemies, but your request would be, that His love might be more strongly felt in your hearts. Such is the petition which best becomes His table, and which He delights to hear and to answer there, and the more fully it is answered, the more devout will be your exercise, and the more abundant your joy. And the love of Christ will continue when the comforts of this world have passed away for ever. These earthly comforts are not designed for a long continuance with you. At death they shall take their leave of you, and as you give them a last look, you will rejoice in hope of seeing the Lord's goodness in the land of the living. They may alleviate bodily pain, and excite the gratitude of the heart, and this is the utmost limit of their influence; but the love of Christ has unstinted death, prepared a quiet resting-place for the body, and opened heaven for the souls of believers. It shall enlighten them there by a sun which shall never go down, refresh them by a river of life always flowing, and adorn them with a crown that never fades away. It hath prepared for them the robes of kings, the work of angels, and the life of God. It shall through eternity maintain their felicity, and delight in it. Now, if amidst all the honours of the world above, the love of Christ shall still have the pre-eminence, if amidst all the variety of their pleasures it shall still be their chief joy, and if amid all the themes of their praise, it shall still be the burden of their song, we surely should remember it more than all below the sun.

Christians, we trust these are your impressions, and that He who searcheth the heart, finds this holy resolution formed there, and expressed to Him in this pious aspiration, 'If I forget Thee, O my Saviour, let my right hand forget its cunning, and let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Thy love to my chief joy.' You are now observing an ordinance in which Christ's love is seen most strikingly in His shed blood, and felt most powerfully in the fellowship of His sufferings; and may you be blessed with His favour, and thus adore Him, 'Because Thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise Thee!'

Treasure the excellencies of the love of Christ in your memories with peculiar care. Worldly men are careful to preserve

a lively and accurate recollection of the objects which have gratified them, of the promises which have excited their hopes, and of the methods by which they have triumphed over their opponents; but the good man would wish, if it were possible, to banish every trace of what is vain and trivial from his memory, and to occupy it completely with the displays of the love of Jesus. Study those displays with care, review them with frequency, listen with eager attention to every discourse which may expand your ideas of it, or which may deepen its impression, and avoid everything which may weaken its hold of your memory and of your heart. Let this be the purpose which you now form: 'Whatever I may forget, Thy love, O Lord Jesus, shall be remembered, and whatever may claim the chief place in my memory, this alone shall have it. Present comforts may render me less anxious to call back those that are gone; but while I rejoice in what Thou bestowest, and in Thy gifts to my soul this day, I will never forget what Thou hast done. In the decline of nature, memory may lose many of its recollections; but it shall not be with the consent of my will, if it forgets aught that I have known, or received from Thee.'

Contemplate the excellencies of this love with more frequency and delight than any other objects. Devote large portions of your time to meditation on this topic, and exclude everything which may distract your attention; yea, even in seasons when other things have just claims on your notice, let your Saviour's love mingle itself with your views and purposes. This will neither impede nor distract you in any duty or engagement, and it will preserve you from the anxieties by which worldly men are harassed and from the temptations before which they fall. Never let this spirituality be exhibited in any ostentatious form, for this will be employed to render your profession ridiculous, and will be considered as giving plausibility to the charge of hypocrisy against you. Let the beauties of creation lead you to Him of whose glory they are but shadows, and the events of providence to Him who worketh all things according to the counsel of His will. Let the truths of Scripture guide you to Him whose glory it unfolds, and whose will it declares; and when you muse on the worth and the affection of a departed friend, let faith look to the Saviour exercising unwearied care over His own, and loving them for ever, and say, 'The Lord lives, blessed be my Rock, and let the God of my salvation be exalted.' 'We will think of Thy loving-kindness, O God, in the midst of Thy temple, in the midst of our worldly cares and troubles, in the midst of our best enjoyments, in the midst of the sorrows of death, and in the midst of the wonders of heaven.'

Let me call on you also, to make Him every suitable return of affection. Without love to Jesus, His love will neither be remembered nor thought on; for who feels any anxiety about meditating on that which is to him a matter of indifference. It is love that strengthens the recollections of the memory, and maintains unwearied the views of meditation. And then only is His love remembered suitably to its value, when we can say, 'We love Him, because He first loved us.' Can we contemplate love so ardent with indifference, love so faithful and constant with a heart wavering and treacherous, love making such sacrifices, and bestowing such blessings, without a wish to present to Him our all, and love shining in the whole course of His mediation, and yet deem it sufficient to yield Him the worship of an hour, or the thought of a moment? You condemn such conduct as unreasonable, and you feel that it would be most shameful and base; and though such a part could be acted with safety, we trust that you shudder at the idea of being guilty of it. Ever act as becomes those who have said, 'Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none on earth whom I desire besides Thee?' and let this be your impression through all the scenes of time, which you will feel through all the ages of eternity, that 'Christ is all in all.'

I exhort you further, to give every suitable expression of your high sense of your Redeemer's love. In your praises mention the loving-kindness of the Lord; and let these be the books which you delight to read in which His name is magnified. Let your conversation be religious and heavenly, and in order to its being listened to with attention and respect, let it never be mixed with the language of party, or anything that indicates a censorious temper. There is little to instruct, and less to edify, in controversial discussions. Let us speak the truth in love, and when we are called on to express our disapprobation of what is vicious, let us do it in a manner which may enhance in our own estimation, and in that of others, the beauties of holiness. Embrace every opportunity of attending on that ordinance where Christ's love is commemorated, and show that this exercise of communicating tends to raise His disciples to higher degrees of elevation above the world, and of zeal in holiness; and be assured that the communion table is never deserted but where love hath become cold, and that it is a strong indication that other obligations are also disregarded. And remember that Jesus hath said, 'By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another;' and 'if ye love Me, keep My commandments.' Such are the evidences of saintship fixed by Jesus Himself, who hath not left this to be done by

the wisdom of the world, by bigotry in its rancour, or presumption in its vain conceit ; and such is the test to which He will appeal when He shall judge the world in righteousness.

I hope that it is the purpose of all of you, without exception, thus to remember Christ's love. There never was a saint who dissented from this resolution, or who felt disposed to censure it as extravagant or impracticable. It has been the resolution of early piety, to which the world is opening ; and of aged piety, to which it is closing ; of the religious in prosperity, when all is smiling ; and in adversity, when all is dark and dismal. It is the resolution, not only of the soul that is happy, in the sense of this love, but of the soul that sighs, ' O that I knew where I might find Him.' It was the resolution of the pious and the good who once filled the places which you now occupy, and it will be the purpose of those who shall show forth the death of Christ when you are gathered to your fathers. Now let these be the purposes with which you leave this scene of holy fellowship, that whatever labour it may cost you, that however few may think, and feel, and act as you do ; and that whatever opposition you may meet with, your thoughts and your affections, your praises and prayers, your life and death, shall be devoted to Him that loved you, and washed you from your sins in His own blood.

ADDRESS XVII.

I found Him whom my soul loveth.—Song iii. 4.

How rapturous is the joy of those who have found the Messiah ! What is the joy of the scholar in finding a satisfactory solution of difficulties which have long been the perplexity of the wise ? What is the joy of the navigator in reaching, after a voyage of danger and toil, the shore of rest and safety ? What is the joy of the merchantmen seeking goodly pearls, in discovering the pearl of great price,—compared to yours, ye happy disciples of Jesus ? Ye have found Him, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Ye have found Him, who is the consolation of earth, and the light, the glory, and the bliss of heaven. In speaking of His worth, no mention shall be made of aught that the world values, for the price of wisdom is far above rubies.

But as the most groundless pretensions have been made to communion with Jesus, it is proper to state some evidences of its reality, by which you may be able to determine whether

your present feelings are merely the meltings of a passionate enthusiasm. If you have found Him whom your soul loves, you will abhor yourselves. The transports of the enthusiast are mingled with self-complacency, and with disdain of others. But when the excellence of Jesus is contemplated and felt, man loathes himself, and repents in dust and in ashes. Lord, Thou art precious; I am vile: Thou art beauty; I am deformity: Thou art wisdom; I am folly: Thou art light; I am darkness: Thou art God's holy One; but I am the chief of sinners.

If you have found Jesus, your souls will burn with love. Lord Jesus, I am ashamed of this cold, dull, dead heart of mine. It is for this that my tears are flowing in this scene of gladness. Oh that I had an angel's heart to love Thee! an angel's tongue to praise Thee! Not even an angel's heart, nor an angel's tongue, can do justice to Thy matchless beauty, and to Thy infinite grace.

If you have found Jesus, you will not be able to bear the idea of parting with Him. One moment at Thy feet, O my Saviour, one whisper of Thy love, and one smile of Thy face, are worth all that the earth contains; and sooner would I part with the skill of my right hand, with light and with liberty, yea, with the vital blood of my heart, than forsake and renounce Thee. I can see, in all the agonies of a sick-bed, in all the gloom of a dungeon, and in all the horrors of the grave, nothing so terrible to my heart as separation from Thee; and no hell, but this, would be necessary to make me completely wretched. When Christ said to Peter, 'If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in Me,' he felt such horror at the thought of exclusion from his Lord, that he cried out, 'Lord, wash not my feet only, but my hands and my head!' Though I had the world in my possession, I would quit it without a sigh, and for ever, rather than part with Thee. I cannot let go my hold of the hem of Thy garment, and I cannot unloose the grasp by which I hold Thee by the feet, and worship Thee.

If this is your privilege, your feelings will be similar to those of Simeon, when, after waiting long for the consolation of Israel, he saw Christ presented in the temple. 'Then took he Him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation!' I wish to see Thy face without a veil, and to enjoy Thy society without the fear of Thy departure. If a glimpse be so delightful, what will seeing God face to face be? If to taste that He is good, is so gratifying, what will it be 'to be abundantly satisfied with the

fulness of His house, and to drink of the rivers of His pleasure? If His touch makes the heart thrill with joy, what will it be when He shall 'set us as a seal upon His arm,' and place us by His side on His throne? Of this felicity, I trust you are now about to receive the earnest and the first fruits. 'Eat, O friends! Drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved!'

'O happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding!' How admirably do the words that follow this exclamation of Solomon represent your happiness in finding Christ! Have you little of this world? In Christ you have gain better than the merchandise of silver, and wealth superior to fine gold. In Him you may rejoice as one that finds great spoil. Are you sighing at the thought that the days of your pilgrimage shall be few, and that you shall not attain to the years of the life of your fathers? 'Length of days is in wisdom's right hand.' A tranquil old age is often the issue of religion; and the gray hairs of the pious she brings down in peace to the grave. But what though thy locks should never become gray with age, if the wind shall pass over thee while thou art green before the sun, if the worm shall claim thy cheek in its bloom? Immortal existence in heaven is thine. God shall command the blessing out of Zion on thee, 'life that shall never end.'

Are you poor and despised in the world? In Wisdom's left hand are riches and honours; the riches of heaven, and the honour which comes from God, the riches that no rust can corrupt, and the honour which no calumny can stain. Does the world seem bent on making you wretched? Does she assign for you a path, dark and solitary, steep and rugged, a path to which she sends no hand to bear you up, and no ray to direct, and no song to cheer? 'Wisdom's ways are pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.' Is the gourd withered under which you sat with comfort? Are you in continual bondage through fear of death? 'Wisdom is a tree of life to all that lay hold upon her, and happy is every one that retaineth her. Whoso findeth Me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord.'

O happy disciples of Jesus! 'His left hand is under your head, and His right hand doth embrace you.' The light of His countenance is making all bright and glorious around you; and ye feel that the kingdom of God is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

But your finding Christ, not only awakes transport at present, but suggests the most animating hopes as to the future. You may safely conclude, that you shall obtain grace to help

you in time of need ; that you shall be found in Him when you die ; and that you shall find mercy of the Lord in the last day. Let not unbelief suggest, that your strength and your hope may perish from the Lord, for ‘ none of them that trust in Him shall be desolate.’ In the Lord Jehovah there is everlasting strength for you. Fear not that death shall separate you from Him, for it shall find you in His arms, and leave you there. Fear not the flaming fire with which He comes to take vengeance ; for the diligence shall not be in vain, which ye testify that you may be found of Him in peace.

Ye disciples of Jesus, once more I congratulate you on your happiness ; your bands are loosed, your sackcloth is taken away, and ye are girded with gladness. Instead of the cry, ‘ O that I knew where I might find Him !’ I hear you saying, ‘ Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Christ Jesus.’ Instead of the feelings of despondency and terror, this is your language, ‘ Return to thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.’ You have met with a Friend, whose favour is better than life ; with a Comforter, who hath wiped your eyes from tears ; with a Physician, who hath delivered your souls from death ; and with a Guide, who will preserve your feet from falling.

Provide for your Saviour’s continuance. ‘ Give no sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eyelids, till you have found out a fit place for the Lord.’ ‘ As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you ; continue ye in My love.’ Implore His stay, saying, Oh ! ‘ be not as a stranger, or as a wayfaring man that turns aside to tarry only for a night. We are called by Thy name ; leave us not.’ Live as becomes those who enjoy a privilege so exalted. Let your hearts be filled with His love, your memories with His truths, your mouths with His praise, and your lives with His virtues. He will not abandon the heart where His love reigns ; and He will be our companion in the path in which His example is followed. His candle shall shine on the head where His judgments are stored ; and His blessing rest on the dwelling, where religion shines in the domestic virtues. Live as Christians ; then shall men take knowledge of you that you have been with Jesus ; and heaven shall rejoice in you as His. And thus shall you triumph, ‘ This God is my God for ever and ever ; He will be my guide even unto death.’

ADDRESS XVIII.

From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, even glory to the righteous.—ISAIAH xxiv. 16.

THESE words beautifully express the homage you are now to pay to your Redeemer, and the claims which He hath to it. The communion table is a place where every feeling should be sacred to the honour of your Lord and Saviour, and where your hearts should utter in love and zeal those feelings and purposes which are to be discovered in the service and the virtues of your future conduct.

The Person to whom your homage is required, is the Righteous One. This expression points out the purity and rectitude of our Lord's nature and character. In His spirit there was no guile, and in His conduct He was not merely harmless, but beneficent, in a manner and to a degree never seen on earth before. Repelling all the power of a corrupting world, He laboured to sanctify men, and while Himself the victim of injustice, He procured for them the blessings of salvation. In human characters justice often appears with a sternness which gives it the semblance of haughtiness and cruelty; but in Jesus it is accompanied with a pitying heart, and with a bountiful hand. You feel, I trust, this view of His character, allaying the fears excited by the consciousness of your own unworthiness; and He wishes you to show that you believe it, by meeting Him at His table with a lively hope.

This expression points out also the merits of His obedience. By obeying the precepts, and enduring the penalty of the law in our stead, He hath formed a righteousness which defends those to whom it is imputed from every charge, and entitles them to every blessing. 'The Lord our Righteousness,' is the title by which He is made known to us; and regarding Him in this light, our hearts are filled with hope and peace. Were we merely to consider Him as righteous, the consciousness of guilt would make our hearts to quake; we would see nought in this character but purity to abhor, and justice to punish us; but in regarding Him as 'Jesus Christ the righteous,' we behold in Him a Surety to answer every claim, and an Advocate faithful and prevalent.

But the Lord Jesus receives this character on account of the rectitude of His administration. In all the acts of His government, 'His sceptre is a sceptre of righteousness.' There are events which seem to us to darken His administration. Im-

piety rages, which one stroke of His rod could crush, and virtue is depressed and calumniated, which by the word of His power He could make to flourish exceedingly ; but let us remember, that goodness must be tried to display its energy, and to enhance its rewards, and that when the workers of iniquity are most confident and outrageous, He will more signally manifest His glory in checking their violence, and exposing their presumption. At the consummation of all things, when Jesus shall unfold His plans to minds purified from every selfish bias, this shall be the opinion which shall be expressed with regard to them, 'Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty ; just and true are Thy ways, O Thou King of saints.'

History tells us of some, whose integrity, firm amidst every trial, secured them the appellation of 'the just.' With this epithet their names have come down to posterity ; but while we abhor the thought of erasing one letter from the epitaph of the illustrious dead, we must assert that no claims to this character can be likened to His, whose righteousness is the salvation of millions, and shines through heaven, earth, and hell.

Is this a view of Christ's character on which you love to meditate, and is it in this that you wish to resemble Him ? 'Little children, let no man deceive you ; he that doth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous.'

But what is the homage which is required from you, and which the good delight to pay ? It is to ascribe glory to Him, the glory of supreme and unbounded perfection as the true God, and the glory of His successful undertakings as Mediator—of the conquests He has made, the graces He has displayed, and the blessings He has bestowed. If the discoveries of men of science are celebrated in the most eloquent language which admiring genius can employ ; if the warrior lives in the statue, the pillar, and the record that commemorates his victories—shall the memory of our Lord perish, or the song of His worth wax feeble ? 'Let the people praise Thee, O God, let all the people praise Thee.' Heaven regards His excellence as its fairest ornament, the wailings of hell declare how the mighty fell before Him, and His abode on earth was the greatest honour ever conferred on it, and brought back to it more than the charms of innocence. Let this, O Christians, be now the language of your hearts. 'I will magnify that power by which the legions of darkness were vanquished, that love which saved me by the sacrifice of Himself, and that zeal and courage which opened the way of peace to man through all the horrors of the curse.'

But this language intimates your wish that His glory may be displayed. You desire that He may display His glory as the light of the world, by exposing to contempt its errors and superstitions, and leading men to grace and truth ; as a High Priest, by subverting every vain hope of salvation, and making His cross the object of undivided trust and universal exultation ; as a King, by crushing His rivals, and putting His laws into every heart ; as the Lord the Healer, by binding up the broken-hearted ; and as the Prince of Peace, by hushing into perpetual silence the noise of war and discord. It is, I trust, the great wish of your hearts at this moment, that He may display His glory in this assembly, by clothing His priests with salvation, supplying the wants of the poor in spirit, filling with righteousness those who are hungering and thirsting after it, encouraging the trembling penitent with the hope of mercy, and giving to the mourner everlasting consolation. It is your wish that the loftiness of man may be bowed down, and the Lord alone exalted this day, and that His beauty may attract the admiration of every eye, and His grace the confidence of every heart. ‘ Let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen and amen.’

It was the earnest wish of the Old Testament saints that glory might be conferred on the Messiah ; that, after the termination of His course, the Father might welcome Him to heaven, and assign Him the highest place and the brightest crown there, and that angels and archangels might sing forth the honour of His name. It belongs to us to rejoice that all this is done, but we see not yet all things put under Him. And you wish Him to have the glory of reigning without a rival in every clime and in every heart, and that every hour may bring fresh accessions to His standard, and new honours to His name. Such wishes are delightful to your Saviour, for He considers them as an evidence of the lofty and generous character of your piety, and He will fulfil them to His own glory, and to the happiness of His church.

To encourage your hope that this shall be the case, consider what hath been done in that period of the Gospel dispensation under which we live. From the wilds of America, from the Hottentots, who have been considered as the lowest of our race in capacity, from the oppressed slave who has found in Jesus a Friend and a Comforter, and from regions in the East where the propagation of the Gospel was deemed impracticable, this song has been heard, and the most cheering testimonies to the power of religion have been brought ; and we know ‘ that,

even from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, the name of Christ shall be great among the Gentiles, and that in every place incense shall be offered to it, and a pure offering.'

How different is this song of praise from the cry of the idolaters in the days of Elijah, 'O Baal, hear us?' from that of the infuriated multitude at Ephesus in the days of Paul, 'Great is Diana of the Ephesians?' and from the shouts which rend the air amid the impure and bloody ceremonies of heathen nations in the present day? This tribute is a reasonable service, and strengthens the love of excellence in those that pay, and in those who hear it. Too long have we heard from distant regions the afflicting accounts of the ignorance, degradation, and wretchedness of human beings; but now we learn from time to time the benignant influence of the Gospel on their virtue and happiness, and are stimulated by their gratitude to magnify the Saviour, and to walk in His ways. I call on you to be ashamed of the cold and feeble manner in which you have too often sung the Redeemer's praise, and I trust the resolution is now kindling in your souls, 'I will praise Thee, O Lord, with my whole heart, and I will glorify Thy name for evermore.' This fervour may be called enthusiasm, but it is such enthusiasm as swells the notes of the blessed. How delightful is it to mark the harmony with which Christians unite in celebrating the Saviour's excellence! Their dependence rests on the same righteousness, and their love terminates on the same worth. No selfish cry seeks its own superiority, no party attachment shouts for the honour of its leader; but piety, soaring over every lower object, fixes on Jesus, and in His glory and joy finds its own. The multitude with one voice demanded that our Lord should be crucified, and dreadful was that cry which burst from so many lips, 'Away with Him, away with Him; crucify Him, crucify Him.' But the Christian world, with one heart and one song, proclaims the Saviour's worth—calls on all around to honour Him, and devotes to Him every talent. 'Halleluia, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigns.'

Never become languid in the Saviour's praise. Men are soon disgusted with their most favourite objects of admiration, and the heart, eager for novelty, seeks some other character to celebrate; but this theme is inexhaustible, the love of Jesus can satisfy all the wishes of the soul; and the farther you advance in wisdom and holiness, the stronger will be your impressions of His excellence, and the greater your delight in His praise. Were good men at liberty to vary their subject of praise, they would say, 'None but this.'

Remember that your lives must proclaim the glory of the

Righteous, as well as your voices. Let your strict integrity, your regard to truth, justice, and equity, in all your transactions, honour the Master you serve, and the doctrines you believe. The homage of a virtuous life is the noblest tribute you can offer to Him. Without this good conduct, the songs of Zion, and the forms of worship, will only be the evidences of your hypocrisy. 'Whosoever doth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.'

Let the prospect of the Saviour's increasing renown comfort you when your hearts are pained by the blasphemies of His enemies. From foreign nations impious books have been imported into our country, and productions of a similar cast have been sent from Britain to them; but while we abhor the dreadful guilt of such writers, and sigh over the madness of those whom they deceive, we know that before Christ's rising glory His enemies shall either bow to Him or perish. When you die, others shall take up this song, and rejoice, Christians, that though the grave cannot praise your Lord, heaven shall; though death cannot celebrate Him, immortals can; though they that go down to the dust cannot hope for His truth, they that rise to paradise 'wait for the adoption, viz. the redemption of their bodies,' and anticipate Messiah's universal triumph. Have you heard your children cry, 'Hosannah to the Son of David,' in a manner which made you think that their hearts were influenced by His love? they will sing 'glory to the Righteous,' when you are gone; and in thus honouring the Redeemer, they will shed lustre over your memory, and these songs from the uttermost ends of the earth shall be heard in heaven, and shall add another note to its anthems, and new glories to Messiah's reign. 'O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth.'

ADDRESS XIX.

Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness.—ISAIAH xlv. 24.

'ENTER not into judgment with thy servant, for in Thy sight shall no flesh living be justified.' Christians, have you those strong convictions of unworthiness and guilt, which these words display? Have you a deep persuasion, like the humble Psalmist, that if God should bring you into judgment, your condemnation would be certain and dreadful? Ah! what would my torn sacrifice, or my filthy rags, avail to screen me from the vengeance of a holy God! What is the sinner's due

but death? What is the due of the chief of sinners, but the lowest hell? But, behold I bring you glad tidings of great joy; 'Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth.' He gave to the law that holiness of nature, that obedience to its precepts, and that endurance of its penalty which it required from man. 'The Lord is well pleased for His righteousness' sake, He hath magnified the law, and made it honourable.' This righteousness is revealed in the Gospel, and received by faith—received with the rapture with which the condemned criminal accepts a pardon, and received never to be relinquished. This is a righteousness which, in the most frightful tempest of wrath, shall, like a conductor to the lightning, ensure your safety by guiding it past you. This is a righteousness with which its happy possessor can go to the foot of Sinai, and behold unmoved its blackness and darkness. Amidst the strife of tongues, it will make peace rule in his heart. Confiding in its virtue, he can meet the horrors of death with calmness; yes, it will give him acceptance with the Judge of all at His coming. At that bar it will secure one no regard, that he was clothed in purple and scarlet; and subject another to no contempt, that poverty covered him with rags; but the man who submitted to the righteousness of God, shall on that day be arrayed in white raiment, and however obscure his condition on earth was, his name shall be found in the book of life, and Jesus will confess it before His Father and before His angels.

'Thus saith the Lord, Keep ye judgment, and do justice; for My salvation is near to come, and My righteousness to be revealed.' It is brought within the reach of the feeblest hand. Have you laid hold of it? And are you suiting yourselves to its influence? I have no hope for eternity, but the hope which it inspires; I am not come to this table to vaunt of my own merits; to say, 'God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are;' but to profess my entire reliance on, my infinite obligations to, that righteousness which is the testimony of prophets and the glory of the law, the theme of the Gospel and the impulse of morality; the confidence of all believers on earth, and the song of all the redeemed in heaven.

Ye perplexed souls, who dare not use the language of assured faith, is it your most earnest wish, Oh that this righteousness were mine! If I might but touch the hem of that garment, it would lighten my heart! Are you resolved to seek first, and above all other things, the kingdom of God, and the righteousness of it? Had I but this, I could say, Welcome poverty with its rags, and death with the judgment after it. Most righteously was the judgment by one to condemnation; but the

free gift is of many offences to justification of life. In this way I am willing to take it.—If such are your feelings, it is yours.

Ye returning prodigals, who, in penitence and holy shame, have come back to your Father's house, who are saying, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in Thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called Thy son; put me among Thy hired servants.' I desire neither the attire, nor the fare of a son. The servant's place, and garb, and office, are too high for me,—listen to what your indulgent Father is saying. Is it, depart from My presence; I cannot look on those who have disgraced My name, and wasted My bounties? No; 'Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him.' He thinks himself unworthy of the meanest raiment in My wardrobe; to him I assign the best robe. He will bless Me for the crumbs that fall from My table; but 'bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and be merry.' My righteousness is near to come, and My salvation to be revealed. May this be the happy moment of a joyful discovery of the one to your souls, and of a copious bestowal of the blessings of the other! And let your whole hearts, at this solemn moment, go forth to Him, 'who though He knew no sin, was made sin for you, that you might be made the righteousness of God in Him.'

'I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in the God of my salvation; for He hath clothed me with the robe of righteousness; He hath adorned me with the garments of salvation, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.' 'Being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.' Delightful to me is the sentence of justification; but I feel it this moment peculiarly so, when my Surety's lips pronounced it. I heard Him say to His Father, 'their righteousness is of Me.' When I called Him the Lord my righteousness, I saw His complacency in the title in the light of His countenance. There is no robe to me like His righteousness; and I value it as the gift of my best friend. He said not to me, 'Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having on the wedding garment?' Had I heard this from his lips, I would have died with the horror of it at his table; but this was His language, 'Behold I have caused thine iniquity to pass away from thee, and I have clothed thee with change of raiment.'

Guard against every rising of a self-righteous spirit. When you have felt a high degree of ardour in duty, when you have gained a victory over some violent passion, and when your conduct has received the world's applause, let not your hearts be

lifted up within you, neither put confidence in the flesh. Know ye not that pride goeth before destruction, and that by nothing is your Lord wounded more deeply, than by the vain glory which trusts in itself as righteous. Put on humbleness of mind; and in all your services let this be felt, 'Not I, but the grace of God which was with me.' Give no reason to others to suspect that your expressions of self-abhorrence are insincere. It has been sometimes said, and with too much reason, that the strongest language of self-abasement has been used, in order that men might be gratified by the flattery which stated a conviction of its injustice. How despicable is such conduct to men of discernment, and how odious in the sight of God!

Be diligent and zealous in good works. By the prudence of your discourse, the sobriety of your wishes, the ardour of your obedience, the circumspection of your conduct, and your constancy in goodness, wisdom will be justified of her children. The most dangerous enemies to the doctrine of imputed righteousness, are those who contend zealously for it, but are immoral in their lives; who talk of Christ's magnifying the law, yet habitually violate its precepts; who listen with eagerness when justification is illustrated, but turn away their ears from the voice that preaches the holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord; who continue in sin, that grace may abound. Dost thou imagine, O vain man, that the soundness of thy creed will atone for the wickedness of thy life? or, that Jesus will be indulgent to those who habitually violate that law, which He lived and died to fulfil?

Increase in faith, even in that faith by which the just shall live. Let faith contemplate the righteousness of Christ with increasing earnestness, and cling to it with greater firmness than ever.

If, Christians, you have righteousness in the Lord, what can you want which He will not bestow? Can the righteousness that delivers you from hell, leave you to perish in your affliction? Can the righteousness which entitles you to heaven, leave you without a claim to any outward comfort? Whom He justifies, to them He also gives grace and glory; and from them He will withhold no good thing. He who hath procured your acceptance in heaven, will bring forth, even from the darkest clouds of suspicion and calumny, your judgment as the noon-day. He shall stand at the right hand of the poor, when every friend is gone, to save him from the man that would condemn his soul.

Anticipate that scene of happiness which John describes, and of which your present entertainment is a pledge. For both, there is but one garment. The marriage-supper of the Lamb

is prepared, where redeeming love shall bestow the sweetest of its blessings, and to it you shall walk with Christ in white, satisfied with His likeness, and shining in His glory. There you shall sit down, and there shall your happiness and your salvation be made perfect. He hath justified you by His grace, that you might be heirs of eternal life. 'If by one man's offence, death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.'

ADDRESS XX.

All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.—ISAIAH liii. 6.

BEHOLD in this passage, Christians, the ruin and the redemption of man, exhibited in the most affecting light! How are your hearts influenced by this view of man's guilt and misery? It is easy to admit the doctrine of human depravity in general; but to feel our share in it, and to say, from deep conviction, I have gone astray like a lost sheep, is a more difficult and rare attainment. We have forsaken the law of our God; renounced the guidance and control of our Maker; and followed the impulse of principles and passions, whose only object is to hurry us to destruction. 'We have loved strangers, and after them we have gone.' 'Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this. My people have committed two great evils; they have forsaken Me, the Fountain of living waters, and have hewn out to themselves broken cisterns that can hold no water.' Regardless of the approbation of their Maker, some are pursuing human applause; others, unmindful of eternity, are occupied with the interests of this passing scene; while many, as if they had no immortal spirit within them, whose powers they were bound to cultivate, and whose happiness they ought to seek, aim only to decorate and to gratify bodies, which shall soon be the spoil of worms.

And shall these wanderers be brought back? They cannot recover themselves; for 'they harden their necks, and they refuse to return.' And no created power can conquer that obstinacy, or turn them from the influence of Satan to God. But behold the device of infinite wisdom, and the triumph of infinite abounding mercy. The guilt of our apostacy is imputed to our generous Surety; and those influences of the Spirit are

procured by His sufferings, which draw the heart to God with cords of love.

Behold Jesus suffering for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God ! ‘ He bears our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, might live to righteousness.’ In the expression, ‘ The Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all,’ there is an allusion to the solemn ceremony, observed by Divine appointment among the Israelites : ‘ And Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness. And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities, into a land not inhabited.’ Behold the Almighty placing the immense load of your guilt on the head and heart of your generous Surety ! And did He shrink from this load ? No ; He welcomed it most cheerfully, and was willing to be crushed to the dust of death, that He might give rest to the weary and the heavy laden.

In this passage, there may be an allusion to the meeting of a number of streams in one vast cataract. All the floods of sorrow met in one torrent. Deep called unto deep at the noise of God’s water-spouts, and dashed down their waters in all their violence on the Saviour. How stunning the noise, and how impetuous the fury of the angry flood ! It was a flood which, if it had not been thus directed, would have swept us away into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone.

Now, Christians, are your hearts directed in grateful emotion to the atoning Saviour ? Have ye, under the attracting influence of the cross of Christ, forsaken your own ways, and your doings which have not been good ; and are you come to the table of Jesus, to vow to Him, that as you have done iniquity, you will do so no more ? May I address you in the language of the Apostle Peter, ‘ Ye were as sheep who had gone astray ; but ye are now returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls ?’ Is there no vice to which your hearts now cleave, and no idol which you have not renounced for Him ? Trusting that Jesus is your all, I call you to present yourselves living sacrifices to that good Shepherd, who gave His life for the sheep.

‘ The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures : He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul : He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.’ And how did He

restore your souls? He went after me in my wanderings till He found me; He laid me on His shoulders; yea, He placed me in His bosom, and brought me home rejoicing. 'Ye were for some time afar off, but ye are brought nigh by the blood of Jesus.' And thus brought nigh, shall you ever go astray? Remembering the perils and the wants, the wormwood and the gall, the affliction and the misery of the waste howling wilderness, we exhort you to abide in Christ, and to continue in His goodness. Hold fast the profession of your faith without wavering; and listen not for one moment, to the sophistry which would enfeeble the energy, or lull the watchfulness of virtue.

Bear cheerfully whatever burden thy Lord imposes. 'If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.' What is thy burden to the load which Christ bore for thee? And who lays it on thee? It is no merciless tyrant, or hard master, but One who 'will not break the bruised reed, and who doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men, to crush under His feet all the prisoners of the earth.' The Hand that lays on thy burden will lighten it; He will not suffer thee to be tempted above what thou art able to bear; and He will remove it at the proper season. 'Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.' There is not a sorrow in thy lot more than is necessary; nor could an hour have been taken from thy months of vanity, without injury to thy best interests. Wait with patience for the end of the Lord, and say not, the time to favour me will never come. Hast thou never seen the smile restored to the mourner's face? And hast thou never listened to the songs of deliverance?

Think with astonishment, ye disciples of Jesus, on His language to you, with regard to the afflictions of life: 'Peace be with you, and let all your wants lie upon Me.' 'Cast thy burden on the Lord, and He shall sustain thee.' He did not say, Can I forget what I have borne for them already; or can love demand additional displays of pity and kindness? How different was His language! and how unwearied His grace! You know how Moses expostulated with God respecting Israel, 'Wherefore hast Thou afflicted Thy servant, that Thou layest the burden of all this people upon me? Have I conceived all this people? Have I begotten them? that Thou shouldst say to me, carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing father beareth the sucking child, unto the land which Thou swearest unto their fathers.' But hear the gracious promise of your Saviour: 'He shall gather the lambs with His arms, and carry them in His bosom, and will gently lead those that are with young. Even

to your old age I am He, and even to hoar hairs will I carry you. I have made, and I will bear, even I will carry and will deliver you.' Neglected worth attracts His most watchful care, and unregarded sorrow His tenderest compassion. He will not suffer the feeble lamb to perish on the cold and barren heath, nor the tottering frame to stumble and fall; He delights to cherish infant goodness in His bosom; and it is there that He wishes aged piety to sink into its last sleep.

Rejoice, Christians, in the honours now paid to your Redeemer. Of His God you may say, 'Honour and majesty hast Thou laid upon Him. Thou hast made Him most blessed for ever.' On His head there are also many crowns, placed there by the hand of adoring gratitude. The government of the universe, and the key of the house of David, are laid upon His shoulders. 'And they shall hang upon Him all the glory of His Father's house; the offspring and the issue, all vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups to the vessels of flagons.' As you have seen Him on His cross, so shall you see Him on His throne; and as you have had fellowship with Him in His sufferings, so shall you reign with Him. 'I give unto My sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand.' Then shall you ascribe your glory and your happiness to Him, who laid your help on One that was mighty, and to Him who bore your sins, and carried your sorrows, saying with one accord, 'Salvation to our God, that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever.'

ADDRESS XXI.

He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied.

ISAIAH liii. 11.

JESUS, as the Man of Sorrows, is an object which you are often called to contemplate. No object can be conceived which is more adapted to impress your hearts with His love, and to form you to penitence, to submission, and to active goodness. Ye feel its influence, while you behold the shadows of death resting on His eye-lids, and the sorrows of death raging in His heart. But in these words of the prophet, you are invited to view Him rejoicing in the issue of His labours and sufferings. We behold in the Saviour the transformation which His mercy produces in His people, 'Beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness.' In this joy you have the deepest interest; for it is pro-

duced by the prospect of our happiness, and is worthy of Him whose character is love.

The travail of Messiah's soul, is a phrase which expresses the fruit of His sufferings in the conversion and salvation of men. That the conversion and salvation of multitudes were to result from His sufferings, is frequently asserted in Scripture. 'And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.' To human view, the death of Christ seemed the extinction of His cause. The multitude that once seemed attached to Him, were instant with loud voices that He should be crucified. 'Even His chosen followers forsook Him and fled;' and some of them exhibited indications of ingratitude and perfidy still more base. The enemies of Jesus considered His fame as utterly blasted, and all His prospects of support and extension to His cause, as having for ever passed away. They imagined, that if His name was spoken of in future ages, it would be as that of a daring impostor, whom vengeance suffered not to live, and the enthusiasm of whose followers died at the cross of their Master. But how much were they mistaken! The blood of the cross was the dew of His youth, and the Saviour's death was the life of the world. He who complained, 'I have stretched out My hands all the day long, to a disobedient and gainsaying people,' and who wept over the obstinacy of an impenitent city, now extends His arms to embrace the crowds that are flocking to His side; and His heart swells with exultation, as He beholds multitudes turning from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God.

Men seldom live to see the result of their schemes and labours, and the seed sown by them often springs not up till they are dust. But Jesus is alive for evermore. The prosperity of His cause finds not Him in His grave, as success hath often found the leaders of parties among men. 'Yea, He shall live, and there shall be given Him of the gold of Sheba. Men shall be blessed in Him, and all nations shall call Him blessed.'

This result of our Lord's sufferings yields Him the sweetest delight. Many who have found their plans successful, have not felt that happiness in the result which they had anticipated. Envy, malice, and fear, mar the successes of ambition, and a deadly venom hath been found in the overflowing cup. Providence has ordained, that the worldly man shall spend his money for that which is not bread, and his labour for that which satisfieth not. But from what we know of the heart of Jesus, we are certain that this issue of His sufferings must be highly gratifying to Him. Divine benevolence reigns in His soul, and to communicate happiness, was the work of His humiliation, and

it is the glory of His throne. 'He delighteth in mercy.' The destructions of judgment are His burden, but the submission of the heart is His honour, and the salvation of the lost is His triumph.

This is the satisfaction of the purest benevolence. Too often is the pleasure felt by men in the success of their plans, that of the most malignant selfishness, but Jesus is satisfied that His chosen are happy. He rejoices in the discomfiture of the devil, because the prey is taken from the mighty; in the conversion of His people, because then the miserable obtain rest; in their praises, because they are a proof of their cheerfulness; and in their obedience, because the work of righteousness is to them peace, and the effects of righteousness are quietness and assurance for ever. It is true that His own glory shines in their salvation, but this detracts not from the lustre of His love. It leads us to admire that wisdom, which, in showing the exceeding riches of grace, glorifies Him to whom all honour in heaven and in earth is due.

How sweet is this satisfaction of the Saviour! The satisfaction that any event yields, is generally proportioned in degree to the principle which is gratified by it. The happiness felt by the good in visiting and relieving the distressed, corresponds to the power of their benevolence. Some have declared, that the hour in which they made a fellow-creature happy, was the most joyous of their lives. But who can estimate the strength of the Saviour's love? Yet this we must know, ere we can form a full idea of the degree of His satisfaction. Think not that the expression of the prophet is one which indicates a pleasure that is feeble and limited. Men often speak in terms of extravagance of their pleasures, and the language of rapture has been used, when the heart has felt little gratification: but the words of Scripture are those of truth and soberness; and what it ascribes to the Saviour, must be in its nature and degree suited to the perfection of His character. If His heart is satisfied, it must be with joy unspeakable and full of glory. This satisfaction is one of the chief ingredients in our Lord's reward. The praises of the redeemed, are the sweetest music of His temple. If the happiness which a good man communicates to a single individual is so sweet to him, what must not Christ feel in the bliss of the nations of them that are saved? Human beneficence cannot give complete felicity, it is limited to a few of our wants and miseries; but Jesus blesses with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, and enjoys all the satisfaction which can arise from filling us with all the fulness of God.

Christians, what think ye of the spirit and character of Jesus?

No spirit was ever so generous, and no character was ever decked with such attracting lustre as His. In His counsels, He plans our happiness; in His predictions, He anticipates it; in His sermons, He points out the way to it; in His sufferings, He bled and died to procure it; and in His glory, He bestows and enjoys it. The man who has no admiration of Christ, and no affection to Him, must renounce all claim to just perception, and to grateful sensibility. 'Thou best Friend of man, who didst yield Thy soul to such anguish on earth, and givest it to such solicitude in heaven for my salvation! I will learn to love Thee better this day at Thy cross, and at Thy throne.' 'The happiness and improvement which His people should derive from the sacrament of the Supper, were foreseen by our Lord when He instituted this ordinance, with affectionate satisfaction; and when He now views you at His table, may the words of the Prophet Zephaniah be fulfilled, 'the Lord thy God shall rejoice over thee with joy, He will rest in His love, He will rejoice over thee with singing.'

The sufferings which you are now contemplating, must convince you that the satisfaction felt by our Lord in their issue was fully merited. This language can be applied to no joy but His. Even the pleasure felt by good men in their labours of love, is to be ascribed to the indulgent goodness of Him, who, in His grace, bestows what cannot be claimed from His justice. But nothing can be more fit, than that He who died for the salvation of men, should live to bestow it; and that He whose heart was broken by the bitterest sorrows of charity, should be gratified by the sweetest joys of benevolence. What can be more fit, than that He should go forth conquering and to conquer, who, for our sakes, was led to death as a criminal and a slave? What can be more fit, than that He who died and suffered so much to seek and to save the lost, should bring them home to His Father's house rejoicing? What can be more fit, than that eternal life should yield all its pleasures to Him, who, in generous anguish, poured out His soul unto death? In this world we hear the voice of gladness from many a quarter, from which, if God entered into judgment with its inhabitants, lamentation and mourning would issue. In the happiness of the good in heaven, we see grace triumphant; but in the joys of the Redeemer, we behold the due reward of His wondrous love. To the blessings which come on His head, and to the rapture which swells in His heart, justice attests His fullest claims!

Rejoice, Christians, that this benevolent satisfaction of your

Redeemer is constant and perpetual. The satisfaction of earthly success is often short-lived. The most exquisite delights soon pall on the taste; and languor and disgust are visible on the countenance where pleasure sheds its fairest radiance. The greater the pleasure felt by men in their success, it is the more transient. The tranquil joys of contented obscurity remain fresh and pleasing, while the raptures of blazing ambition and gay amusement have sunk into weariness and loathing. But never can Jesus be inattentive to the homage, or indifferent to the happiness of the pious. His affection is not subject to the variations of human caprice, nor His joys to worldly instability. The pleasure which He takes in the first emotions of serious concern in the soul, cannot be withheld from advancing wisdom and piety. This satisfaction of our Lord must be viewed as increasing as the triumphs of His cross are extended; and how sublime will it not be, when He shall present His whole Church to the Father, a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing! Joy inconceivable will shine in His countenance and swell in His heart, when He places them on His right hand, saying, 'Behold I and the children whom Thou hast given Me.' His love in heaven will be displayed in enjoying the happiness which it hath bestowed. His satisfaction will be lasting as the bliss of His redeemed, and infinitely sweeter, from His nobler capacities, and from the influence of the principle so beautifully stated, and so deeply felt by Himself,—'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

Let the truths on which your minds have been fixed, teach you diligence in duty, and circumspection in conduct. Herein is My Father glorified, and herein doth My satisfaction abound, in that ye bring forth much fruit; so shall ye also be My disciples. With such a thought as this present to our minds, we cannot have one feeling of languor, or one moment of indolence in the work of the Lord. What is the pleasure a teacher takes in the proficiency of his pupils, or the excellent parent in the accomplishments of a child, to our Lord's delight in His saints' improvement in wisdom and in goodness? And shall we mar that satisfaction, by our turning again to folly? Would we wish to kindle regret and disappointment in that generous heart? 'Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, by whom ye are sealed to the day of redemption. Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.'

Christians, your Lord is now calling you to benevolent exertion, and to seek your happiness in its fruits. Let us do good to the bodies and to the souls of men as we have opportunity. How unlike to a Master delighting in mercy, are disciples cold

and selfish ! Let us not complain of any anxiety, or labour, or pain, to which beneficence may subject us. ‘They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.’ Ye who weep with them that weep, you shall see the fruits of your sympathizing sorrow and tender care, in the resignation and tranquillity of those to whom you minister. Ye parents, the lessons and entreaties, the anxieties and tears, by which you labour to win your children to goodness, shall not be in vain in the Lord. Ye ministers of Jesus, who travail, as in birth, till Christ be formed in the souls of your people, ye shall save your own souls, and them that hear you. Or, if Israel be not gathered, you shall be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and the Lord shall be your strength. How exquisite will be the rapture felt by the beneficent, when the objects of their bounty shall receive them into everlasting habitations ; which pious parents will feel when their children shall arise and call them blessed ; and which shall reward the toils of faithful ministers, when their people are their rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus ! ‘For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing ; are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming ? For ye are our glory and joy.’

ADDRESS XXII.

Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by ? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of His fierce anger.—**LAMENTATIONS i. 12.**

THE day which you are now commemorating, ye friends of Jesus, was indeed the day of God’s fierce anger ; His fierce anger against sin, and against His Anointed, to whom it was imputed. Had it not been for this day, no salvation would ever have dawned on you ; nor would the Gospel ever have proclaimed, ‘Peace on earth, good will to men.’ It was the day of God’s richest grace to us. ‘Herein God commendeth His love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.’ What an astonishing contemplation is God’s fiercest anger against the Son of His bosom, and His kindest love to guilty and polluted mortals ! How often doth He turn away His anger from us ! ‘never does He stir up all His wrath, for He remembers that we are flesh, a wind that passeth away, and returneth not again ;’ but on the Saviour, His vengeance rested till reconciliation was made for iniquity, and a refuge was opened for every contrite heart.

In this day of His fierce anger, the Lord afflicted His Anointed. If man can create such pain and sorrow when he punishes, what cannot that Arm produce, the thunders of whose power none can understand? Cavillers have represented the afflicting of innocence as inconsistent with the justice of God; they have lavished on this doctrine the harshest epithets, and have maintained, that though misguided and ferocious mortals have punished the unoffending, in the procedure of Jehovah pain is inflicted only on the guilty. But, in consequence of our Saviour's generous substitution of Himself in our place, it was a righteous thing with God to bruise Him; and He to whom the sins of His people were imputed, must bear their doom.

The sorrow which the anger of God produced is unparalleled on earth. In sickness, there is no pang; in destitution, there are no horrors; in fear, there is no agony; and in remorse, there is no anguish like it; nor can it be equalled in hell. There, every one bears his own burden; but Christ endured the misery due to all His own. The wrath distributed in all these vials was collected into His cup. In hell, impatience writhes, and impiety blasphemes; but in the garden, and on the cross, how meek and resigned is the Sufferer! In His demeanour, we see the strongest indications of resignation and love divine, amidst all the effects of agonizing sorrow. Christ raises His eye in hope to the black cloud, from which God's fury was rushing down, and entreats Him to be merciful to those who are showing Him none. His heart breaks, but His faith is unshaken; and, 'My God, My God!' was the language of Jesus while made a curse for us.

Such, Christians, were His sorrows; but were they not yours? They were my sorrows, cry the spirits of the just. They were my sorrows, is the voice which I hear echoed back from the communion table. 'Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows;' the griefs which we deserved to have borne, and the sorrows which we deserved to have carried. Is this nothing to you? Is there one even in this house, to whom the Saviour's sorrows excite no interest? Can there be such a person at His table? During Christ's sufferings, many of the spectators were not only unconcerned about His sorrows, but there were numbers who, when they passed by, reviled Him, 'wagging their heads, and saying, If Thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross, and we will believe on Thee.' Yea, during His agony in the garden, His three companions thrice fell asleep; and while their Master struggled, they were sunk in slumber. But, Christians, your hearts are strongly affected,

and you can appeal to the pious emotions of your souls ! Ye say, O my Saviour, let this throbbing heart, and these falling tears, bear witness how much I am impressed, and how deeply I feel the generosity of Thy love. If I do not remember Thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth. Lord, Thou knowest all things ; Thou knowest that no object interests me like the Saviour in sorrow ; and that my chief joy is, that He is now blessed above all.

Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, how that though He was supremely blessed, yet for our sakes He became a man of sorrows, that we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us. The Lord had mercy on me, said Paul, in preserving a dear friend, lest I should have had sorrow upon sorrow ; but no such mercy was shown to your Redeemer, nor could be shown, consistently with His character and work as Mediator.

If there never was any sorrow like your Lord's sorrow, should there be any gratitude, praise, and love like yours ? Ye angels of light, shall ye always exceed us in your admiration and love ? Your connection with Him is more distant, and your obligations are fewer than ours ; but how ardent are your hearts, and, ah ! how cold is mine ! How lofty are your praises, yet how grovelling are mine ! Let such Divine influence be imparted, that my faith may grow exceedingly, and that my love may be more abundant. And shall you not serve Him for ever, who sorrowed to death for you ? All the affection this heart can feel, all the praise this tongue can express, and all the service this life can pay, ought to be Thine, and shall be Thine.

Let the agony of your Lord strengthen your abhorrence of sin. The sorrow of Christ shows you the horrors it deserves. Whatever enjoyment it promises, whatever appearances it puts on, and whatever argument it urges, you will find an antidote to them in this scene of anguish. Sin gave my Saviour killing sorrow, and can it give me enjoyment ? It came to Him in its undisguised deformity, and its appearance to me is but a fair show. Its flatteries and pleadings may be sweet and soft ; but while I hear my Saviour's groans, and their sound shall never leave me, I cannot listen to aught it has to say. The feet which have carried me to Gethsemane, shall never bear me to the chamber of vicious indulgence ; nor shall the heart that has melted in holy love, be again inflamed by malice and envy.

Ye who are now happy in the enjoyments of religion, let the sorrows of our Lord teach you to value your felicity. These

fruits, which are so sweet to your taste, grew in Gethsemane's garden ; and the plants that produced them were watered with the blood which was shed there. Seek not for the pleasures of the world ; and think not its favourites happy. You see their eye in its lustre, and their cheek in its bloom ; but you see not the sunk eye and the wan cheek of premature decay. Be kind and sympathising to those who are in sorrow, and let not prosperity make your language disdainful, or your demeanour cold. The time may come, when you will occupy their place in the dust, and they yours on the mount with God.

Sorrow must needs come ; ' but in your patience possess ye your souls.' Look to the garden and the cross, to maintain your acquaintance. When God's wrath lies hard on you, and He afflicts you with all His waves ; when the carelessness or the treachery of your friends shall leave you solitary in affliction ; when iniquities shall prevail against you, and Satan shall threaten to devour you ; when you can see nought of God but His frowns, and feel nought from Him but His strokes ; remember the sorrows of your Lord, to teach you patience, and to encourage you to hope. The love and sympathy of that heart cannot be cold, which submitted to such unparalleled sorrow ! The degree of His sorrow demonstrates the height and depth of His love. The consolation of God cannot be small with you, for the Saviour suffered unmitigated anguish, that your comforts might abound ! It is not His sorrow, but His peace, which Christ hath bequeathed to His disciples, and ye shall experience, in your troubles, what He felt not in His. ' Amid the multitude of my thoughts within me, Thy comforts delight my soul.' Your sun shall break through the darkest cloud, and your midnight horrors shall be as the noon-day.

Should you suffer, ye followers of Christ, and should you die in darkness, how blest will your surprise be when you shall meet your Saviour, and hear Him thus address you : ' Enter into My joy, for thou didst die in sorrow like Me.' But, how often is the end of the good man full of peace ! Instead of the voice of lamentation, we hear him exclaiming, ' Animated by the sweet sense of my Saviour's comforts, my heart is glad, my glory rejoices, and my flesh also shall rest in hope.' He waits for me in the paradise of God, to witness His happiness, and to share in it. ' My Beloved speaks, and says to me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.' He doth not say, Sit ye here at the gate, while I go and rejoice yonder ; but come away, for lo ! the winter is past, the rain is over and gone, and sorrow and sighing have fled away for ever. O Lord Jesus, since Thy life and Thy soul were filled with sorrow, my heart

should be all affection, my speech all praise, and my conduct all obedience ! Let my death be as Thou pleasest, only let it magnify Thee ; and let me die in the Lord, and I shall be blessed for ever. Amen.

ADDRESS XXIII.

I will raise up for them a plant of renown.—EZEK. xxxiv. 29.

THE figurative representations of the Saviour's character and work are frequent subjects of meditation to Christians, and convey the truths of the Gospel with much sweetness and power to the heart. You are now to consider Him as the Plant of Renown, and while I set before you some of the excellencies for which He is so justly celebrated, may the Spirit so enlighten and impress you, that all those pious feelings may be excited, and all that holy pleasure experienced, which will render the communion service acceptable to your Saviour, and delightful to you.

This Plant is renowned for its beauty. The beauty with which the God of nature hath adorned many of the productions of the earth is wonderful. It is not merely on a slight inspection that they charm ; but the more minute the examination is, and the more enlightened and correct the taste, the admiration which they excite is always heightened. ' Consider the lilies of the field how they grow ; they toil not, neither do they spin, and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all His glory was not arrayed like one of these.' But the loveliest production of nature is only a faint emblem of Him who is possessed of all Divine excellence and all moral worth, and in whom the greatness which excites admiration is united with the tenderness which wins our love. Jesus is the image of the invisible God, fairer than the children of men, more bright in excellence than angels, and for ever unrivalled in all that charms the heart. And while the beauty of the fairest plant quickly passes away, and while in the midst of its glory it droops and dies, this Plant cannot lose aught of its freshness, or any of its tints.

To see the beauty of the Lord in His sanctuary was the supreme desire of David, and for this he was willing to turn away his eyes from all the world's attractions ; and such I trust is your great wish. You feel that the forms of worship, the society of your brethren, and the labours of ministers, however suitable and fervent, could not compensate for His absence. The sight of Jesus in His excellence will produce a humbling sense

of your own vileness; but so far from damping the ardour of your desire, this will strengthen it; for you are as solicitous to advance in repentance and humility, as in any of the other graces of the Spirit.

This Plant is renowned for its fruitfulness. Beauty and fruitfulness are not always associated in plants; nay, those which are most beautiful are generally least distinguished for utility; but this Plant is as deservedly celebrated for the value and abundance of its produce, as for its beauty. It is impossible to enumerate all its fruits; for every blessing by which the soul can be enlightened, sanctified, or comforted, is derived from it. The knowledge which is life eternal, the peace that calms the conscience, the purity which renovates the heart, the comfort which gives thanks in affliction, and the hope that triumphs in death, are from the Lord Jesus; yea, from Him proceeds all the felicity and perfection of the paradise above.

Every plant has its own peculiar fruit. We expect not grapes from the apple, nor figs from the vine; but this Plant bears twelve manner of fruits, and yields all that is necessary for the purity and happiness of the soul. It is long ere some plants bear fruit; the expectation excited by their goodly blossoms is often disappointed; and when they have yielded their increase, it is not till a subsequent season that we can expect aught from them again; but the Tree of Life yields its fruit every month, and at all seasons it imparts its blessings. Never does a true penitent go away from it empty, and thousands may put forth their hands at the same moment, and share of its produce. You are now in a scene where Jesus hath often dispensed His blessings, and if you have come to it with a strong sense of your spiritual necessities, and with an earnest desire that He who can alone supply them may bestow on you what you so much require, He will load you with His benefits, and cause you to retire from it, saying, 'Out of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.'

This Plant is renowned for its virtues. There are some plants which are in high request for their medicinal qualities; and it should call forth our gratitude to the Creator that He hath provided so amply remedies for the evils by which the body is afflicted, and teaches men to know and apply them. But no plant can be likened in virtue to the 'Balm of Gilead,' and it affords a remedy for all the plagues of the heart. Raging corruption is quelled by its influence, and the anguish of a guilty conscience is healed. It is like the tree which Moses was commanded to cast into the waters of Marah, which rendered them wholesome and sweet. It makes the severest affliction

tions light, and death, which the worldly man dreads as his curse, to be welcomed with gratitude.

Superstition hath attributed many wonderful virtues to the fancied relics of the cross; but the efficacy of this Plant in curing the moral diseases of the human heart is incontrovertible; and one touch of it by the hand of faith will bring from it a remedy for the worst maladies of the soul. Implore the Saviour to impart to you at His table that Divine influence which will heal those plagues of the heart, which are so offensive to Him, and so painful to you, and that He may strengthen those gracious principles which seem ready to die.

This Plant is renowned for its fragrance. So condescending is the providence of God, and so rich is His goodness, that He ministers delight to all our senses, and hath given to various plants a delightful odour. We read of the smell of Lebanon, and in the East, such is the profusion of odoriferous plants in some places, that the air is scented by them for a great space around. But the fragrance of the most favoured spot is not to be compared to that of the Plant of Renown. Every virtue of Christ's character, and every promise of His word; every precept of His law, and every rite of His worship; every act of His mediation, and every blessing of His grace—are to the good like ointment poured forth. 'His lips are like lilies dropping sweet-smelling myrrh; all His garments smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia, and His death was a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour unto God.' It hath made the loathsome dungeon pleasant, and overcome the noisomeness of the grave.

When Jacob appeared before his father in the goodly raiment of his brother Esau, Isaac blessed him, and said, 'The smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed.' You now appear before God, clad in the righteousness, and animated by the Spirit of His Son, and for His sake God will accept you with your sweet savour, and receive all your gifts. When the king sitteth at His table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof.

This Plant is renowned for its shadow. Shade was of much consequence in the East, where a scorching sun exhausted the strength and spirits; and one of the most soothing images by which consolation in sorrow was exhibited, was that of the shadow of an expanded tree, or of a great rock in a weary land. And such is the shadow of this Plant of Renown, that the fainting are revived by it, and the drooping soul is cheered. To you Jesus is now addressing His kind assurances of peace and safety; the expression of which gratifies His benevolence,

and the fulfilment of which shall show the power of His might and the tenderness of His compassion ; and I trust the consolation you are now experiencing in His presence, is leading you to adopt the language of the Church, ‘ As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I am sitting under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit is sweet to my taste.’ The poor find here the rest of contentment, and sickness and sorrow that of patience and acquiescence. Here the persecuted find a place of refuge from the evils of the world, and the tempted a retreat from their spiritual enemies. Here age finds repose after the fatigues of life, and the dying obtain a peace which the terrors of the last hour cannot shake. It is here where the flesh rests in hope, and where dying saints enter into the joy of their Lord. ‘ I will abide in Thy tabernacle for ever, and I will trust in the covert of Thy branches.’

You have now probably some anxious thoughts as to your future lot, and it would be foolish to expect that all your remaining days will be easy and prosperous ; but no storm shall find you without a shelter, and in no calamity can you be utterly desolate. Jesus can supply all your wants, He can support you in every trouble, and make you as happy in the day of adversity as ever you were in your most prosperous seasons.

This Plant is renowned also for its permanence. Plants most noted for beauty are seldom durable. That delicacy of form and colour which makes them so charming, renders them less able to resist the buffetings of the rude blast, and by successive production the vigour of the fruitful tree is exhausted. Trees which, in former ages, were the glory of forests, and the shelter of the brave, are now to be traced only in the rotten stump, or are buried under heaps of moss or clay. But the Plant of Renown can suffer no injury from the violence of enemies, and there is in it no principle of decay. To Jesus belongs the power of an endless life. The rough blast of persecution hath beat upon it, and the axe hath been lifted to cut it down, yet it remains unhurt. Christianity hath seen mighty empires sink in ruin, and generation after generation going down to the dust, yet its life and its virtues are unimpaired. ‘ I saw, in the visions of mine head a tree in the midst of the earth, the height thereof reached to heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of the earth, the leaves thereof were fair, and its fruit much, and in it was meat for all ; the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of heaven dwelt in its boughs ; and behold a watcher, and a holy one came down from heaven, and cried, Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches ; shake off his

leaves, and scatter his fruit ; let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from its branches.' Such is the mandate which hath often been issued against earthly potentates ; but the Plant of Renown hath Omnipotence for its defence, and eternity for its duration.

Contemplate the verdure and beauty of this Plant with increasing wonder and delight, and trace with intense interest its eventful history from the fields of Bethlehem, where it first arose to human view, to Calvary, where it was cut down—from the garden of Joseph, where it sprung up on the third day, to Mount Olivet, whence it was conveyed to heaven, there to be the ornament and felicity of the paradise of God. Look not with desire on the forbidden fruit of sin. Never forget the dreadful moment in which, when 'Eve saw that the tree was good for food, and pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave to her husband, and he did eat.' If any gratification is forbidden by your Maker, if it is likely to prove dangerous to your innocence, or if it may be hurtful to others, you must abstain from it, and let your self-denial be determined and cheerful. Apply this Plant habitually to all the maladies of your souls, and think not when the pain is mitigated or the wound cleansed, that the cure is completed. You must improve its influence till perfect love hath cast out every fear, till you are wholly freed from the oppressing and defiling influence of the body of death, and till you stand complete in all the will of God.

Beware of seeking comfort under any other shadow. Wicked men flee for consolation to sinful indulgences or worldly pursuits, and their sorrow is forgotten, and the heart is hardened ; but continue ye in Christ's word, and His promised sympathy will sooth your hearts to rest. And indulge no fear as to its permanence, for the power that raised up this Plant can and will protect it. The superstitions which men have tried to graft on it shall be torn away ; but this is far from being an injury to it, or an omen of its destruction. You are rooted in Him, and it becomes you to bring forth abundantly the fruits of righteousness. How animating is His language, 'Herein is My Father glorified in that ye bring forth much fruit, so shall ye also be My disciples.' The glory of God is the end of your redemption as well as of your creation, to conform you to Christ's active and suffering virtues is the object of all religious institutions, and 'if you have been planted in the likeness of His death, you shall be planted also in the likeness of His resurrection.'

ADDRESS XXIV.

And the prince in the midst of them, when they go in, shall go in; and when they go forth, shall go forth.—EZEK. xlv. 10.

THESE words refer literally to the rulers of the Jews mingling with them in the services of the sanctuary. In the house of prayer, the rich and the poor meet together; and rulers should consider that they are as dependent on God as the meanest of their people, and that association with them in religious ordinances is the best security for the protection of the prince, and for the allegiance of the subject. But this passage may be viewed as pointing out to us that presence of the Lord Jesus Christ in the worship of the sanctuary, without which it will yield us little pleasure or advantage. How gracious and encouraging is the promise of His presence, 'Where two or three are met together in My name, there am I in the midst of them!'

'The Prince,' is a title frequently given to our Lord in Scripture, and we require to be reminded of it, that we may give Him the glory which is due to His name. By the Father's appointment He is invested with regal dignity; and what has been said of some earthly princes by lips of flattery, is true in its fullest sense of Him, 'that He reigns in the hearts of His people.' Wisdom and justice, power and grace, shine in all His administration. He is clothed with majesty, and girt about with might: eternal life is at His disposal, and the keys of hell and of death are in His hand. In the praise of earthly princes genius employs all its powers, but in the praise of Messiah, your Prince, His voice is heard whose testimony is as much superior in glory to human applause, as His wisdom and purity transcend that of erring mortals. 'To the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom.'

We see not yet all things put under Him, but we know that His kingdom shall rule over all. Already have the darkness and the abominations of heathenism passed away in many regions before Him, and the time hastens on when the proudest of His rivals shall be humbled in the dust, and every tongue confess that He is Lord. Earth, so long a scene of slaughter and confusion, shall, through His influence, be formed into the abode of harmony and love, and bless Him as the Prince of Peace. Hell, filled by those 'who would not have Him to reign over them,' shall proclaim the guilt and folly of His despisers; while heaven, shining in His glory, and resounding

with His triumphs, shall raise from all its borders the homage of adoring gratitude and love, 'My Lord and my God.'

But this Prince is in the midst of His people. This is a common representation of our Lord's station. It was typified in paradise by the tree of life in the midst of the garden; under the law, by the tabernacle of the congregation, which was placed in the middle of the camp, and by the mercy-seat, which stood between the cherubim in the temple. In heaven He is the Lamb in the midst of the throne; and, to point out His constant inspection and vigilant care in the Church on earth, He is said to walk in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. 'Cry out, and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.'

This expression intimates that He is visible to all. He is not described as surrounded by a few who engross His attentions, while those at a distance can catch only a partial glimpse of Him, but as encircled by all; and from every part of the circle He is beheld and admired. The beauty of the Lord, ye timid and dejected souls, is displayed for you; and if your eyes do not behold it so clearly as others, it is because corruption hath spread its films over them. Implore Him to impart to you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him; and if you can say that it is your supreme desire to have your hearts filled with His love, and captivated by His beauty, you shall 'see His goings, even the steps of majesty of your God and your King in the sanctuary.'

Christ also is in the midst of His people, as accessible to all. Earthly princes are accessible only to a few, and to approach them requires much influence, and a compliance with many rules and precautions; but Jesus saith, 'Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion, for lo I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee.' The feeblest voice may whisper its complaints into His ear, the trembling hand may touch the hem of His garment, and the eye of sorrow may drop its tear upon His feet. Every suppliant may put his petition into His hand, and receive an answer directly from Himself. Little children may come to Him with their hosannahs, and the aged and the helpless with their many infirmities. In this circle I see attention sitting at His feet, entreaty stretching out its hands, affection walking by His side, faith leaning on His arm, and obedience treading in His steps. Say not, 'Who shall ascend up to heaven, to bring Christ down from above? or who shall descend into the deep, to bring Him up from below? for the word is nigh thee, and Christ in that word.'

But Christ, as in the midst of His people, is ready to per-

form for them every necessary office. He is at hand to supply the wants of the indigent, and to lighten the burdens of the sorrowful; to strengthen the weak hands, to revive the spirits of the humble, and to bind up the hearts of the contrite. He is in His Church like a father in his family, to receive their testimonies of confidence and affection, and to teach and warn them in all wisdom. And He is there as a prince in his court, receiving the homage of His courtiers, and distributing His favours among them. History records that a heathen emperor sighed over a day as lost, because on it he had conferred no favour. While we admire the generosity which awakened this regret, we can rejoice that, in the administration of Him who is exalted a Prince and a Saviour, not a moment is lost to mercy.

How pleasing is the assurance that He will go in with His people when they go in! Were the Lord Jesus present merely as a spectator, the idea of this would fill you with terror, for you know that your performance of religious duties is very different from what it ought to be. But He is with you to aid your devotions by His influence, to check the motions of corruption, to enliven the religious affections, to purify your services, and to present them to His Father.

When you go in to public praise, He is there to inspire the heart with pious ardour, and in public prayer He is there to excite holy desires, and to fill your mouths with arguments. He goes with you to the hearing of the word, to make it the power of God to your salvation. He goes with His saints to the place of baptism, to take in His arms the little children there presented to Him, and 'to pour His Spirit on His people's seed, and His blessing on their offspring.' You have felt Him present with you, I trust, when you were examining yourselves, pointing out to you the heavenly origin and tendency of your governing principles, fortifying you against the harsh conclusions of a jealous and desponding spirit, and making your deeds manifest that they have been wrought in God.

And now, when you have come in to the Lord's Supper, He is along with you to record your vows, to receive your homage, and to make it the communion of His body and blood. Let the consciousness of His presence stir you up to perform the duties of this day in a manner becoming those who are acting under His eye. How solemn, and yet how delightful is this place, which He fills with glory, and blesses with peace!

The Redeemer assures you that He will go forth with you when you go out. It is a great mistake to imagine that we

only require His presence when we engage in religious ordinances. It is most needful that He should be with us when we retire from them, to keep the 'Evil One' from catching away the good which has been wrought, to maintain the fervour of devotion, and to enable us to act suitably to our profession. You have been hearing His word; He will go forth with you to incline you to obey it. You have been showing forth the Lord's death; He will go forth with you to enable you to exhibit the moral influence of His cross. The saints of God feel many anxieties lest their feet should slide as they descend from the mount, and their profession be disgraced by their folly; but He will go down with you, who is able to keep you from falling. Amid the pleasures of religious fellowship, it is painful to think of the evils of the world, and of the malice of the wicked. You are quitting the harbour for the troubled sea, but He is with you who rules in the raging of the ocean; and in the very hour when the idea of being left by Him to destruction is filling you with horror, He will come to you walking on the waves, and dissipate your fears. He will go forth with you to mark whether your conduct corresponds with your profession, if your resolutions are kept, and your vows are fulfilled. The eyes of your brethren are on you, and you feel a desire to maintain their respect and their confidence; but there is an eye also upon you which follows you where human inspection cannot penetrate, and marks every wish, and every thought. 'Study to show thyself approved unto God.'

Be zealous for the glory of your Prince's name, the rights of His throne, and the obligations of His law. Active and steady goodness is the best allegiance to your Prince and Saviour. Be regular in your attendance on religious ordinances. Shall the presence of Christ ever become less attractive to you? He notes every instance of neglect of His worship, and will call you to an account for it; and if the excuses of many are so frivolous that they cannot offer them to their own consciences without shame and fear, how shall they present them to Him 'who is greater than our hearts, and who knows all things?'

Be conscientious in your observance of all private ordinances; and rejoice that Jesus goes with the pious to the closet of prayer to animate their devotion; to the scene of meditation, that He may elevate and tranquillize the soul; and to the secret corner, where the Bible is read, to open the understanding and to sanctify the heart by His truth. The shepherd boy reading his Bible on the mountain's side, and the peasant shut out from many of the sources of knowledge, have often

shown how 'the entrance of God's word gives light, and makes the simple wise.' He will be with you in your domestic worship, to show His love to a pious family, to bless the habitations of the just, and to point them out to attending angels as an image of heaven.

Let the consciousness of Christ's being with you keep you from everything offensive in His sight. 'Hear, O my people, and I will testify to thee; there shall be no strange God in the midst of thee.' Shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy by our evil passions, or shall hypocrisy compass Him about with lies? If this is the case, He will leave us with the marks of His abhorrence, or if He stays, it will be to take vengeance on our inventions.

Beware of going to any scene where you cannot expect Him to go in with you. None can ask his Lord to go with him to the scene of licentious amusement; and no tokens of the Saviour's presence are to be seen in the laughter of folly, and the dissolute excess which is worse than mad. It is impossible for a good man to go to such scenes without injury to sobriety and to seriousness, and when he adds to this the encouragement which the wicked take from such conduct to scoff at the restraints and the enjoyments of religion, he will turn away from every enticement to dissipation. But be of good comfort, Christians; your Lord will go with you wherever you go at His call. When He calls you into the scene of trial, He will go with you to fortify your virtue, and He will go out with you from it to teach you to walk circumspectly. He will go in with you to the furnace of affliction, that your experience there may be like that of the three children in Babylon. The astonished monarch said, 'Lo, I see four men loose walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.' And He will go forth with you to heighten the joy, and to secure the fruit of deliverance. He will go with you to the house of mourning to give the oil of joy, and He will go forth with you, that in your path, darkened by the shadows of death, you may walk in the light of His countenance.

The time is coming when you must go forth from the world by a path dark and dismal. Your dear companions in all your former dangers and sorrows cannot then go with you. But you shall not depart alone: He will take you by the hand, and be your guide through death. And He will go in with you to heaven. Are you terrified at the idea of going to God the judge of all? He will go with you to present you to His Father as the subjects of His kingdom, and the friends of His

heart; and His presence will open to you all the mansions of rest, and all the fountains of joy. Amen.

ADDRESS XXV.

As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water.—ZECHARIAH ix. 11.

WHAT words, Christians, can be conceived better adapted than these, to affect your hearts with what Jesus hath done for you? 'Look to the rock whence ye were hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye were digged;' not to fill you with gloom and horror, but to inflame your gratitude to your great Redeemer.

Ye were prisoners; on you corruption had fixed its chains, and on you the wrath of God rested. Imprisonment is a state of sad adversity; yet it may be endured, in a place where accommodations render it tolerable. But the place of your imprisonment was a pit, deep, dark, and loathsome, and in it there was no water to refresh or to purify. Poor and miserable, wretched, blind, and naked, was your condition. From this pit, neither men nor angels could relieve. They stood by its brink, looking in pity on its captives; but the condition was universal; 'Our help is vain.' Their compassion was like the ray that enters the dungeon of the prisoner, which shows him the nakedness of its walls and the strength of its bars, but which lightens no chain, and inspires no hope.

'Shall the prey be taken from the mighty? Shall the lawful captive be delivered?' With the utmost anxiety these questions were put by benevolent and pitying angels. There was but one place on which hope fixed its eye, the throne of the Eternal: though in what way mercy could save without the dishonour of justice, the wisdom of angels was unable to discover. Hear, O my soul, the Voice which awakened rapture in the breasts of pitying angels, and sent down hope to the scene of woe. 'The prey shall be taken from the mighty, and the lawful captive shall be delivered; for I will contend with them that contend with thee, and I will save thy children.' A Deliverer appears, amply qualified for the arduous task. It was determined in the eternal counsels of heaven, that these prisoners should be released, and that the Messiah should die to redeem them from all iniquity. 'I the Lord have called Thee in righteousness, and will hold Thy hand, and will give Thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the

blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners out of prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house.' In pursuance of this appointment, Jesus obeyed and died ; and in Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace. In the preaching of the Gospel, He comes, and says to the prisoners, Go forth ; and to them that sit in darkness, Show yourselves. Hear how He describes the manner of this deliverance, and its happy effects : ' I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love ; and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them. They shall feed in their ways, and their pasture shall be in their high places. They shall not hunger or thirst, neither shall the heat nor sun smite them ; for He that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the streams of water shall He guide them.'

How justly may not Jesus triumph in these wonders which He hath wrought ? Did the generous heart of Ebedmelech triumph when he drew up Jeremiah from the frightful dungeon ? Have the humane rejoiced in rescuing a sinking fellow-creature from the devouring deep ? Has the patriot rejoiced in setting his captive brethren free ? and may not our Redeemer, with much more reason, exult in the great things which He hath done for us ? These acts of generous interposition required nothing that deserves to be compared with the sufferings and efforts of our Redeemer. ' The anointed of the Lord, the breath of our nostrils, was taken in their pits, He of whom we said, Under His shadow shall we live among the heathen.' He was humbled as none ever before was humbled, and bruised as none was ever bruised. On this grace of your Saviour let your hearts dwell : and in the bread now to be put into your hands, contemplate that body which was broken to procure you the bread and the water of life ; and in the wine, behold the symbol of that blood of the covenant, which is the price of your release, and the source of your salvation.

' I waited patiently for the Lord, and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise to our God.' ' I will praise Thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart, and I will glorify Thy name for evermore : for great is Thy mercy toward me, and Thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.' ' Thou hast, in love to my soul, delivered it from the pit of corruption ; Thou hast cast all my sins behind Thy back ; the Lord was ready to save

me, therefore will we sing my songs to the stringed instruments, all the days of our life, in the house of the Lord.'

How blessed, O Christians, is your state! 'The Son hath made you free, and ye are free indeed.' He makes you to lie down under the shadow of the tree of life; ye draw water with joy from the wells of salvation; ye walk before God in the light of the living; and a throne eternal in the heavens is yours in promise and in hope.

Regard the blood of the covenant as precious blood. Let it have the praise of all your happiness, and the glory of all your attainments. This blood, which reached you in your low estate, shall flow for ever by the throne on which you shall reign in life, and it will be your employment through eternity, to declare the depth of guilt and misery from which it saved you.

Rejoice in this covenant. It is your covenant. Its blood is yours, to deliver you; its promises are yours, to encourage you; its blessings are yours, to enrich you; its seals are yours, to assure you; its comforts are yours, to alleviate your sorrows; and its laws are yours, to guide you to perfection. If guilt could not sink you beneath its power, why should you imagine that affliction can? Behold how its virtue reached David, when he went down to weep in that place of graves, where the glory of his house had been laid low: 'Although my house be not so with God, yet He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure; and this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although He make it not to grow.'

Perhaps there are some of you in a state of dark despondency, and from whom the cry is now rising to heaven, 'Let Thy tender mercies speedily prevent me, for I am brought very low.' How sweetly doth the grace of the Redeemer assure you that relief shall come, that the Lord will help you, and that right early! 'When the poor and the needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them; I will open rivers in dry places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a spring of water, and the dry land pools of water.' The efficacy of this blood of the covenant, is felt in the lowest pit of despondence: it drops on the downcast heart, and saves the afflicted, who lie low in grief. It hath made the lamentation, 'Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, and in the deeps,' give place to the song, 'I will extol Thee, O Lord, for Thou hast lifted me up, and hast not made mine enemy to rejoice over me.'

Take comfort from this precious blood, in the prospect of

death and the grave. We shall go down to the bars of the pit, when our rest together is in the dust. But Christ was taken from prison and from judgment, to secure our deliverance in due season. Dark as this pit is, His eye beholds all that is in it; and His power shall be felt in all its depths. 'What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise Thee? Shall it declare Thy truth?' Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints: and the house of silence shall resound with His praise, who blessed its repose, and hath shed through it the light of life.

Fear not that you shall be cast into the pit of hell. You must indeed flee with unwearied earnestness from the wrath to come; and never must you think that you are as far from it as is necessary, till you sit down with Christ on His throne. Yet indulge not that dread of it, which arises from a distrust of the power and grace of the Redeemer; for that mandate of heaven renders it impossible for all the powers of hell to drag you down to it, 'Deliver from going down to the pit, for I have found a ransom.' The smoke of that pit may obscure your prospects for a season, but the Lord shall drive it away, by the spirit of His mouth, and by the brightness of His coming. Soon shall the voice from the excellent glory call you from a world of distance and darkness, imperfection and sorrow, to the scene of light, perfection, and joy, to the friend and to the home of your heart. 'Now may the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, by the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good word and work, to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever.' Amen.

ADDRESS XXVI.

How great is His goodness!—ZECH. ix. 17.

SUCH is the language which the contemplation of the grace of Christ at His table hath often prompted, and which, we trust, it is now prompting you to utter in the presence of your God. How great is the goodness that shines in His purposes! Think of the grace which was given you in Christ in the eternal counsels of heaven, and of the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Amidst all the glories of the heaven of heavens, 'He rejoiced in the habitable parts of the earth;'

nor could angels or archangels engross the friendship of His heart, 'for His delights were with the sons of men.'

How great were the sacrifices which His goodness made! From riches He stooped to poverty, from happiness to the curse, from glory to shame, and from the throne to the cross. The dearest of all His enjoyments, was His Father's love; yet to the power of His anger, He yielded His soul. He gave not the armies of heaven nor the riches of the universe, but Himself, for us. How great are the gifts which His goodness bestows! Pardon to the chief of sinners, adoption to the children of wrath, liberty to the captives, wisdom to babes, healing to wounded hearts, and holy beauties to the depraved. What are the gifts He bestows, but the liberality of goodness? What are the consolations He imparts, but the sympathy of goodness? What is the protection He affords, but the shield of goodness? What is the watchfulness which He exercises, but the care of goodness? What are the checks by which He stops us in the career of folly, but the restraints of goodness? And what is the glory He is preparing, but the crown of goodness?

How great is the extent to which His goodness spreads! It flies with the wings of the morning, to raise universal nature to life and gladness. It descends with the shadows of the evening, to hush the creation into soft repose. It proclaims salvation to the ends of the earth, and it opens heaven for men of every clime. I hear its praise in the songs of the spring, and I trust I shall soon hear it in the anthems of the blessed. If in some scenes I see a brighter blaze of goodness than in others, there is not one on earth in which I cannot trace its rays. I have seen it in the smile of infancy and the rest of age, in the contentment of the poor and the hope of the dying.

And how great is the duration of His goodness! Our goodness is often as the morning cloud, and as the early dew; but the goodness of our Lord endureth for ever, unexhausted in its stores, and unwearied in working. This earth, which is so full of His mercy, shall pass away; time, whose rolling tide spreads its bounties from day to day, shall sink into eternity; but the Saviour's goodness shall fill a nobler sphere, with blessings suited to a state of perfection, by a stream overflowing and ever full.

Christians, what think ye of this goodness? This was the opinion which some of the Jews once expressed with regard to Him, 'He is a good man.' The beneficence of His life proclaimed His goodness. To man's present happiness, His miraculous powers were devoted, and it was the grand object of all

His toils and sufferings, to procure his eternal salvation. But this manner of speaking used by the Jews, seems cold, and as a eulogium on His character, it is scanty praise indeed. Thus far only will Socinians go in their ideas of Him; but how chilling is such language to the devout and affectionate heart! How uninteresting is the object which such men contemplate at the communion table, love merely human, and a death that made no atouement! But ‘hereby perceive we the love of God toward us, in that He laid down His life for us.’ No language, O Lord Jesus, can be too high for Thine excellence! I will regard Thee as not only the best of men, but the best of beings, and I will honour Thee as I honour the Father. It is the language of the Psalmist, which can alone express my feelings, ‘How excellent is Thy loving-kindness, O God!’ There are heights and depths in His love that pass knowledge; He is the great God, and my Saviour. In eternity, in time, in the church and in heaven, in the songs of angels and in His people’s gratitude, in the Father’s heart and in the Spirit’s love, He is the first and the last. Once I lived without Him, but ever since I tasted that the Lord was gracious, I cannot. He shall have my supreme love, my constant and my last look, for in Him I see generosity without a parallel, mercy without a limit, and grace without end.

Christians, admire His goodness. This is the exercise of heaven and of eternity. Faculties more acute than yours cannot conceive, and tongues, fired by the eloquence of heaven, cannot declare its magnitude. Superior spirits, who look on many of the objects of human admiration as you do on the wonder of children, share in those feelings of devout astonishment with which you contemplate the grace of Jesus.

Reverence His goodness, and live under its influence. Let it be the subject of every song; the pillar of cloud that shades you by day, and the pillar of fire that guards you by night. Let it be the meditation of solitude, and the talk of your social intercourse. The beauties of the summer appear far more charming, when viewed as spread by its hand, and its radiance brightens the gloom of winter and the darkness of midnight. Welcome affliction as the rod of goodness, and obedience as its will.

Imitate His goodness. ‘To do good and to communicate, forget not. As ye have opportunity, do good to all, especially to them that are of the household of faith.’ Like Christ’s heart, let yours be melting; and like His hands, let yours be open. Be liberal and steady in your support of the institutions of

piety and charity, and let no cavil or pretext of their enemies, induce you to diminish or withdraw your aid. Let this striking character of our Lord accompany you wherever you go, 'He went about doing good.' With this object in view, selfishness will not prevail, nor will beneficence become weary.

Lament the general disregard of His goodness. 'O that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!' Let the idea of the unworthy returns which are made by so many to a Benefactor in heaven, suppress the murmurs which are ready to burst from your hearts at the ingratitude of those whom you have obliged. Your gratitude may make the unthankful to blush; your fervour may make the careless to burn. The melody of praise heard from the dwelling of humble poverty, may make the luxurious and the wealthy ashamed of that discontent, which frets and curses in the bosom of abundance. Rejoice in the hope that men shall yet utter abundantly the memory of His great goodness, and sing of His righteousness.

Beware of abusing His goodness. The talents with which He hath intrusted you, He will soon require; and no indulgence can you expect from Him, if you have hid them in the earth, or squandered them in folly. Happy will it be for those who shall be found good and faithful servants; in them His bounty is honoured, and they shall be its objects for ever.

Rejoice in the hope of the Psalmist, 'Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.' Mine enemies may imprecate reproach and shame to follow me, but the curse causeless shall not come. My fears may suggest to me that my poverty may come as one that travaileth, and my want as an armed man; but for more pleasing expectations, I have every security which the love and the promise, the death and the life, of Christ, can give me. 'I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.' Listen not for one moment to the dark forebodings of terror and despair, but give all diligence to attain the full assurance of hope to the end. Think of what Jesus is now preparing for you; a place in heaven, and a safe conveyance to it. When faith looks at this object, the tears of sorrow cease to drop, and the slackening pace is quickened. The Lord shall give that which is good for your present support, and for your future felicity. You may receive what nature will deem evil things in this world, but hereafter your joy shall be unmixed and full.

Soon 'shall you come and sing in the heights of Zion, and flow together to the goodness of the Lord, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock, and of the herd;

and your soul shall be as a watered garden, and ye shall not sorrow any more at all.' 'O how great is the goodness which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee,' and which shall gild every throne with splendour, and fill every heart with pleasures evermore!

'Now may the good Lord pardon every one that prepareth his heart to seek God, the Lord God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary.' 'May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.' Amen.

ADDRESS XXVII.

How great is His beauty!—ZECH. ix. 17.

SUCH is the language of all who have seen Jesus. How great is the beauty of His divine excellencies! Their lustre is too bright even for the cherubim to behold with open face. 'He is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person.' Holiness underived, and mercy inexhaustible; almighty power and infinite wisdom, are His. While the Jews saw in Him only the carpenter's son, while many discern in Him merely a man eminent for wisdom and goodness, we behold in Him the form of God, the fulness of the Godhead, and 'the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.' Honour and majesty are before Him; strength and beauty are in His sanctuary. I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory.

Behold Him as the Son of Man; and, in this view, 'how great is His beauty!' How sweet was the mildness of His patience! How lovely the fervour of His charity! Devotion, in its sublimest aspirations, marked His walk with God; and the kindest sympathies of friendship and compassion, His intercourse with men! How delightful was the benignity which smiled on His infant countenance! How captivating the demeanour, which made Him, in opening youth, increase in favour with men! 'How beautiful on the mountains were the feet of Him that preached good tidings!' and in the fields and villages, the hands of Him who ministered to the happiness of the wretched, and at whose touch disease fled away! Ere His course was finished, 'His visage was indeed marred more than any man's, and His form than the sons of men,' but it was labour and anguish that wasted it. Watching and toil effaced the bloom

of His countenance, and the lustre of His eye was dimmed by the tears of sorrow. How great is His beauty, in His dyed garments in the garden! There is no voice which has such power to melt the heart, as that of our Saviour's lamentations; and no spirit was ever so mild and indulgent as that which thus apologised for the companions who slept during His agony, 'The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak?' How affecting is the appearance of the Saviour in the whole scene of suffering! The idea of His love spreads a glory over the crown of thorns, and renders the face which He hid not from shame and spitting, more interesting to the heart than that of an angel. How lovely is the face of a dying saint, when we see on it the serenity of patience, the animation of hope, and the kind affection that says, 'I could not part with you, but to go to my Saviour!' but behold, on the cross of Christ every grace hath its perfect work, and shines with unrivalled glory. How beautiful is His countenance, when covered with the paleness of death! Never did death come to any in a form so hideous as he did to Christ, and never did he assume a form so pleasing, as when the Saviour had vanquished him. 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?' The pious now feel friendship's grasp in thy cold hand, and the destruction of sin and sorrow in thy last stroke.

How great is the Saviour's beauty now! Hear how the Apostle John describes it: 'I saw in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks one like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the breasts with a golden girdle. His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes were as a flame of fire. And His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters. And He had in His right hand seven stars, and out of His mouth went a two-edged sword, and His countenance was as the sun when he shineth in his strength.' The splendour was too dazzling for mortal eyes. At the sight of it, the disciple that once leaned on His bosom, 'fell at His feet as dead.' Jesus wears this garment and this girdle, because for you He was stript naked and bound with cords. His feet are like fine brass, because for you they were brought to the dust of death. And His countenance is like the sun shining in its strength, because for you it was changed by sorrow and death.

Now, Christians, what influence have these representations of the Saviour on your minds! 'One thing have I desired of the Lord, and that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of

the Lord, and to inquire in His temple.' 'Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty.'

'He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root from a dry ground. He hath no form, nor comeliness; when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him.' Such was the estimate formed of Him by the Jews, under the influence of ignorance and prejudice. But is it your opinion of Him? No; 'Thou art fairer than the children of men; grace is poured into Thy lips, therefore God hath blessed Thee for ever.' 'My beloved is white and ruddy, the chief among ten thousand. His mouth is most sweet, yea, He is altogether lovely.' Admire His beauty more and more. Here your praise cannot be too glowing, nor your wonder equal to the excellence of its object. In that world where He is seen face to face, not an eye wanders from Him; nor is there a heart there but feels as the Psalmist did when the Spirit of Glory rested on him, 'Whom have I in heaven but Thee?'

'O love the Lord, all ye His saints.' The perfection of beauty demands your whole heart. He claims your love from the excellencies of His character, as well as from His gifts; and in His view, that is the purest and the noblest affection, which loves Him for Himself. It is impossible that creatures can love Him to the degree that His excellencies deserve. There is One only whose complacency in Him is equal to His worth, I mean the Being whose eternal delight He was. 'Behold Mine Elect, in whom My soul delighteth.'

Let the Saviour's beauty turn away your eyes from the ensnaring attractions of the world, and keep you from doting on its vain show. Let moral beauty be ever that which excites your delight and your praise; the integrity, which no prospect of gain can corrupt; the kindness, which no ingratitude can chill; the humility, which no elevation can destroy; the purity which, in a dissolute age, keeps itself untainted; and the contentment, which submits cheerfully to every hardship.

Let this beauty reconcile you to the perishing nature of all earthly attractions. 'When with rebukes Thou correctest man for iniquity, Thou wastest his beauty like a moth.' Let this flower perish, the Rose of Sharon never fades. With what regret would we behold the desolations of the declining year, the withering leaves dropping from the trees, the tempest scowling over the hills, and the feeble influence of the winter's sun, if we had no hope of the spring; but we know that the God of nature shall make all things new, and the God of grace will beautify the meek with salvation.

Rejoice that the Saviour will beautify you. He will free you from all the remains of sin, and adorn you with all the beauties of holiness. 'Though ye have lien among the pots, ye shall appear as doves, whose wings are covered with silver, and their feathers with yellow gold.' He will brighten the pallid face of sorrow, and 'He will give beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness.' It is the purpose of His Father's heart to conform you to the image of His Son; and in the accomplishment of it, His glory will shine in your rising excellence. He will be admired, not only in Himself, but in that resemblance to Him, which shall be apparent in all that believe.

Your beauty shall consume in the grave from your dwelling; but the body which corruption hath disfigured and worms consumed, He will restore and fashion like not merely what His body was on earth, but to His glorious body. Such is the beauty with which He will deck you, that this is the language in which He will address you, 'Thou art all fair, my love, and there is no spot on thee.' And to this you will answer, 'In Thy beauty we shine, in Thy grace we stand, and in Thy joy we rejoice.' 'Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water through the word, and present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.' Thus arrayed, thus shining like the Saviour, with no sorrow around you to imbitter your happiness, and no dread of its diminution or change, you will say with Peter on the Mount, 'Lord, it is good for us to be here,' for we are with Thee. 'We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.'

ADDRESS XXVIII.

And one shall say unto Him, What are these wounds in Thine hands? Then He shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of My friends.—ZECH. xiii. 6.

THIS question is expressive of surprise, and of affectionate concern. That one so inoffensive and so beneficent as the Son of Man, one so detached from the tumults and strifes of the world, so meek in His Spirit, and so gentle in His manners, should be thus treated, may well excite our astonishment. We behold around us many instances of the unworthy treatment of the good, but it might be supposed that excellence such as

that of our Lord would have conciliated, or at least awed, the most profligate and audacious.

When we consider that it is not a stranger who is thus abused, but our best friend and benefactor, we feel solicitous to be acquainted with the cause of such treatment, and are ready to say, 'As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die.'

The answer which our Lord gives to the question, leads you to meditations fitted to wring your hearts with penitential anguish, and to fill your faces with shame. Beware, in the sad review which you are now to take, of directing your indignation chiefly at the misconduct of others, and of flattering yourselves with the vain conceit that of you the Son of Man hath little reason to complain; but 'looking on Him whom you have pierced,' mourn bitterly, as one lamenteth for an only son.

Christ was wounded in the house of His friends, when He was so basely treated by His own disciples. One of them betrayed Him into the hands of His enemies. That a member of His family, a constant associate, and one who had received from Him so many marks of kindness, should act so treacherous a part, deeply affected the heart of our Lord. 'It was not an enemy that reproached me, or I could have borne it, but it was thou mine acquaintance; we took sweet counsel and went to the house of God.' He was aware of the use which the Pharisees and Scribes would make of this circumstance, to support their virulent calumnies against Him, and to excite such prejudices against His apostles, as might impede their success, and endanger their lives in promoting His cause.

But the rest of the disciples acted a part which, though by no means so wicked as that of Judas, was faulty in itself, and painful to the heart of their Master. When He was apprehended, they all forsook Him and fled. Though Jesus wished not to subject them to suffering or death, and though He did not desire their aid to rescue Him from the violence of His enemies, it would have been consolatory to Him to have seen them discover in the face of those that persecuted Him, their strong attachment to Him, and exhibit an example of fortitude in His cause, to animate the resolution, and maintain the firmness of His future disciples. It must have strengthened the insolent contempt which His enemies felt for the friends of His cause, when they saw them thus abandoning it in the first hour of its jeopardy; and it must have grieved our Lord to witness such cowardice, and such a want of confidence in that protecting care which they had so often experienced.

Peter also denied Him. He who had drawn his sword and

cut off the ear of Malchus, by his threefold denial of Christ thrice pierced His heart. Under the impulse of sudden fear he disregards his Master's solemn warnings, and his own repeated pledges, and declared with curses, 'I know not the man.' To be disowned by our friends in the day of our calamity is felt by the good as a great aggravation of affliction, and the look which Christ gave to Peter intimated, that while He forgave him, He considered his conduct as perfidious and cruel.

Christians, you ought now to call to your remembrance the instances in which, from the dread of the ridicule and abuse of the profane, you have withheld from the cause and the friends of religion your countenance and support. You are ashamed to meet your Lord after such treachery, and on account of it He might justly disown you, but He permits you to express your regret for your unworthy conduct, and to implore His grace to render you more zealous and stedfast in future.

But our Lord was wounded in the house of His friends, when He was crucified in Jerusalem, the house of His professed friends. The nation of Israel is often styled in Scripture the chosen people of God; to the Jews were committed His oracles and ordinances, and He had bestowed on them many peculiar blessings. To them the Messiah was promised as the glory of His people Israel, and ardently was His appearance expected; and yet, when 'He came to His own, His own received Him not.' As He did not assume the character of a temporal prince and conqueror, and did not deliver them from the Roman yoke, they despised and rejected Him; and notwithstanding the purity of His doctrine, the splendour of His miracles, and the beneficence of His life, they crucified and slew Him with wicked hands. The peculiar people of God denied the Holy One and the Just, and killed the Prince of Life. The Roman Governor who condemned Him was the tool of their malice, and the Roman soldiers who crucified Him were but the instruments of their cruelty. 'They were instant with loud voices that He should be crucified.'

This is the scene which you are now contemplating; and how admirable is that wisdom and grace of God which hath so ordered it, that by those sufferings, by which the Jews gratified their envy and their malice, the salvation of men was obtained! While the Jews point to our Lord's wounds as tokens of their vengeance and their triumph, we will look to them and say, 'He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.' He now calls

you, in melting remembrance and lively faith, to trace the variety and the severity of His sufferings; and, while you contemplate this most affecting spectacle, consider the share which your offences had in producing them, and by what pangs the pardon and acceptance in which you now rejoice, were procured. Let your hearts be filled with love and sorrow while you behold His body broken for you, and His blood shed for remission of sins to many, and for remission of sins to you.

In a different sense from those already stated, Christ has been wounded in the house of His friends; and the mention of it may strengthen your godly sorrow, and produce a salutary caution. He is wounded in the house of His friends by the immoral conduct of His disciples. When a professor of religion indulges in intemperance, is fraudulent in his dealings, commits lewdness, neglects the interests of his family, or fills them with terror by his violence and tyranny, the cause of the Gospel receives a deep stab. The profane exclaim 'this is the end of their solemn looks, their long prayers, and their sacramental vows; these saints are all knaves in heart, and their form of godliness is only a cloak for their deceit and rapacity; you will meet with more upright and honourable conduct in a heathen who knows not Christianity, or in an infidel who abhors it, than in its most zealous friends.' Such horrid speeches, and the actions which give occasion to them, make rivers of water to flow from the eyes of the fearers of God, and Jesus cannot behold them unmoved. He complains of His followers who act an immoral part in the language employed by those whose patience has been severely tried, and whose hearts have been broken by the ingratitude, folly, and wickedness of those from whom they expected very different conduct. He knows the fatal influence which the slanders of the scorner, supported by such immorality, have in preventing many from attaching themselves to religion, who had become favourably disposed to it, and that they excite in the hearts of the young, prejudices against Christianity which the most powerful arguments and the most exemplary virtue cannot vanquish. The profligate conduct of some who bear the Christian name, has injured it much in the estimation of heathen nations. The brutality, the avarice, and the fraud of some who have visited their shores, have made them execrate the Gospel as a system of deceit and cruelty, and dread its entrance among them as they would the raging of the pestilence. If you talk to them of the blessings which Christianity brings in its train, they will point to their burning villages, and their desolated

fields, and say, 'Such are the fruits of our connection with Christians.'

Your consciences are now charging you with the offences by which you have grieved the Spirit of Jesus, and given occasion to the adversaries of the Lord to blaspheme; and how bitter are such recollections in a scene where they are contrasted with His unwearied kindness! Banish them not from your hearts, but let them remain as constant monitors against sin, and as powerful excitements to you to adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour in all things.

But Christ also is wounded in the house of His friends, by their strifes and schisms. It is mournful to think for what frivolous reasons Christians have separated from each other, what malignant passions they cherish, and what abusive language they apply to those whom they ought to love as brethren. The more frivolous the grounds of dispute and division are, the more violent is the manner in which the schismatic contends for his own views, for it is thus that he hopes to magnify his cause to his own conscience, and in the public estimation. To such disgraceful scenes the infidel points, as unanswerable arguments against the spirit of Christianity; he talks of the mildness and forbearance, and candour of philosophy, but says that the temper formed by the Gospel is censorious and malignant, and that it is owing entirely to the restraints of law that rival sects do not attempt the extermination of each other by persecution and murder.

Dissensions among Christians are grieving to our Lord. A father could not behold his children abusing and striking each other with indifference, and Jesus views with deep concern the evil tempers of men thus striving to defeat that influence of His meekness and love, by which He labours to unite them in the bond of peace, and exhibiting His religion, fraught as it is with mild wisdom, and glowing with fervid charity, as the source of envy, slander, and contention. Were Christians to think on this as they ought, we should not see so many new sects and rival parties formed. The schismatic, who causes divisions to gratify his own vanity, and to avenge himself for the slights which have been put on him, and who dignifies his bigotry and rancour with the holiest names, is regarded by the Saviour as a foe to His glory and to His peace, as aiding infidelity in her assaults on the Gospel, whetting her sword and poisoning her arrow. Let me exhort you to follow peace with all men, and by speaking the truth in love, and acting with uniform integrity and gentleness, you will extinguish the prejudices of those who differ from you, and contribute to diffuse that forbearance and catholic love

whose influence will one day unite the Christian world, and thus fulfil the earnest prayers of its Lord.

Before I dismiss you, I may state what you will feel as consolatory to your hearts, that Jesus is wounded in the house of His friends by His sympathy with them in their sorrows and persecutions. When Saul was on his way to Damascus, with the most cruel designs against the followers of our Lord, He addressed him in these memorable words, 'I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.' The good man who has been shut up in a dungeon for the cause of truth, and whom no voice or look of compassion ever reaches, has felt his Lord with him in his dark abode, and that He remembered his bonds as bound with him. The martyr, in his agonies, may hear from the spectators only taunts and curses, but the heart of Jesus glows with admiration of his fortitude and melts with compassion for his sufferings.

But in all our afflictions He is afflicted. In the good, who labour under the anxieties and privations of poverty, or whose hearts bleed from unmerited calumny, or the disappointment of some generous purpose, or who, from the loss of friends, pine in gloomy solitude, He feels a tender interest, and will, by the riches of His grace, the joys of His presence, and the tokens of His approbation, comfort such mourners. Let this mercy of the Lord Jesus influence you to bear your sorrows with becoming fortitude, and to exemplify to each other that sympathy and kindness by which your sufferings will be alleviated, and your hearts knit to one another, and by which the Spirit of Christ will be glorified, and His law fulfilled.

ADDRESS XXIX.

Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid.—MATTHEW xiv. 27.

THESE were the words of Jesus to His disciples on a memorable occasion. The tempest was raging, the ship was in the midst of the sea tossed with waves, the night was dark; a figure appears walking on the waters, and superstition combines its terrors with those of nature, to overwhelm the mind. Jesus straightway addressed them in a manner which suppressed their fears and revived their courage. Such is the language in which He now speaks to you.

To you, who are confounded at the brightness of His glory, He saith, It is I, the faithful Friend, the Guardian of the helpless. The compassion of My heart I have carried to the throne; and My reign is the rule of grace and love.

To you, whom guilt is depressing, He saith, It is I; I am come from My throne to show you what I bore for you on the cross, and to sprinkle you with My blood, that you may be whiter than the snow. The timid penitent I glory to acknowledge, and none of his tears shall fall in vain: 'To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and that trembles at My word.'

To you who are dismayed at the thought of the presence of spiritual intelligencies around you, He says, It is I; I to whose control they are all subjected, and at whose command they advance or retire. With Me by your side, you may exclaim, 'I am persuaded that neither angels, principalities, nor powers, shall be able to separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus my Lord.'

To you who are lamenting thus, 'Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of Thy water-spouts; all Thy waves and billows pass over me,' He saith, It is I. 'O thou afflicted, and tossed with tempests, and not comforted; behold I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones.' The Father of mercies rides in the whirlwind, and the God of peace sits on the floods.

To you who are bewailing the loss of pious friends, with whom you used to sit at the communion table, whose hearts used to burn, and whose tears often fell with yours, Jesus says, It is I. 'I will not leave you comfortless, I am come unto you.' In my presence you shall enjoy the purest delights of friendship. Prepare your hearts for the voice, the light, and the blessings of My love.

Sublime is the description which the Psalmist gives of the voice of the Lord; but how different is the voice with which He says to the soul, 'I am Thy salvation.' The voice of His thunder breaks the cedar, shakes the mountains, divides the flames of fire, discovers the forests, and lays waste the scene of beauty; but the voice of His love binds up the bruised reed, composes the agitated soul, causes the smoking flax to shine, brings forth the obscurest grace to view, and makes the desert to rejoice and to blossom as the rose.

'I will hear what God the Lord will speak.' O that He may say to my soul, 'Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed; for I am thy God.' But what are the motives which influence you to make this request? Is it the selfishness which looks only to your own comfort, or is it that the compassion and grace of God may be glorified in raising you from doubts and fears, to the full assurance of faith? Is it that you may serve Him with

more alacrity, and rejoice in Him more abundantly than before? Is it that you may be able to comfort others with the same comforts wherewith you are comforted of God? Then to you God now saith, 'I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour.'

'Say ye to the righteous, it shall be well with him.' 'Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not; behold your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; He will come and save you.'

But I hear the voice of sorrow complaining thus, 'Verily Thou art a God that hidest Thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour.' 'Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which Thou hast broken may rejoice.' But how soft and sweet is the Saviour's answer: 'I will see you again, and your hearts shall rejoice.' In the darkest hour, hope in His word. Amidst the storms and tempests of sorrow, believe His love. 'Although thou sayest thou shalt not see Him, yet judgment is before Him, therefore trust thou in Him.' Yes, I will, 'though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.' 'We had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God that raiseth the dead, who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver, in whom we trust that He will yet deliver us.'

Hath the Redeemer made Himself known to you as your Friend? Cultivate fellowship with Him, and be zealous for His honour. If ye keep His commandments, ye shall abide in His love.

Hath He been your refuge and your strength, a present help in trouble? You may boldly say, 'The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man can do unto me.' This cross may be too heavy for nature, but it cannot be too heavy for nature supported by the Omnipotent. This service may be arduous, but it is not too difficult for him who is strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. This sea is rough, but the Lord rules the raging of the ocean, and I am safe under His care, whom winds and waves obey.

Let the generous and seasonable interpositions of Jesus in your behalf, strengthen your affection to Him. His presence is a defence in every danger, the charm of every scene of happiness, and an answer to every fear. Lord, Thou deservest my whole heart, and whatever else I love, I will love it for Thy sake, and I will love it in Thee.

It is incumbent on you, Christians, to defend, by the inno-

cence and cheerfulness of your lives, the reality, the sweetness, and the virtuous influence of experimental religion. You have to defend it against the presumptuous dreamer, the cold speculator, and the worldling who minds only the things of the flesh. They will scoff at the boasts of enthusiasm; but in their hearts they will do justice to that meekness and gravity with which the modest, the prudent, and the stedfast believer, 'gives a reason of the hope that is in him.'

Provoke not the Saviour to depart from you. Would you put yourself in the condition of the traveller, round whom the light dies away, and who must pursue his journey in solitude, terror, and darkness?

The Redeemer hath spoken to you; and what hath been your language to Him? 'O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord.' Your hearts impel you to add, 'Lord, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest.' 'All people will walk every one in the name of his god; but we will walk in the name of the Lord our God, for ever and ever.' Through honour and dishonour, through good and through bad report, through ease and difficulty, in solitude and in the crowd, in life and in death, I will cleave to Thee. I will go in the strength of the Lord God. I will go on my way rejoicing. These are pious and noble resolutions, and the Saviour hath heard them, and they are recorded on high. But they must not only be made, but kept; and the more excellent they are, the more base it is to be unfaithful to them. May that God, whose kindness has suggested them and at whose feet we now place them, confirm us in every holy purpose, in every religious principle, and in every Christian duty! Amen.

ADDRESS XXX.

And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.—MATTHEW xxii. 11-13

CHRISTIANS, we often address you at the table of our Master in the language of consolation; but this parable calls on us to mingle the voice of alarm with it, and to warn the presumptuous hypocrite of the fearfulness which shall surprise him.

The King came in to see the guests. He marks not merely

the gravity of their outward appearance, but the most secret workings of the heart. There is not a table that is filled at which the guests are unnoticed; but such is His mercy, that His presence is oftener felt in the blessings of His love, than in the impressions and the upbraidings of His anger. 'Thou, God, seest me.'

He saw there one not having on the wedding garment. This expression does not intimate that the appearance of a hypocrite at the communion table is a rare occurrence; but that, however few may be their number, and by whatever crowds of the pious they may be surrounded, the God of Zion will 'find them out.' Let not the hypocrite congratulate himself on the dexterity with which he personates the character of a genuine disciple, and that no human eye regards him with suspicion, for the Son of God is here, whose eyes are like a flame of fire; and to them all hearts are naked and open.

How mild, at first view, seems the expostulation of the King! Yet in it there is a majesty and a force which overwhelm the soul of the sinner. 'Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment?' How camest thou to the commemoration of My Son's death, without a pious regard to a suffering Redeemer; and to the feast of love, without the charity which is the end of the commandment? Didst thou come to insult the entertainment, and the Entertainer? Didst thou imagine that My eye would be unable to detect thee? Didst thou prefer thy own raiment to Mine, as better than any with which I could furnish thee? Didst thou imagine, that because neither the guests nor the servants resisted thy intrusion, there was nothing to dread from Me? Didst thou come to this feast, that by the mask of a religious profession thou mightest more securely carry on thy course of knavery and oppression, and hush the censure which hath assailed thy character?

O my God, these are dreadful challenges indeed, but I trust they do not apply to me. I have put on the Lord Jesus Christ, 'who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth;' and in this character I have received Him, and His Spirit I wish to cherish. But the convicted hypocrite can make no such appeal,—he is speechless. He cannot say that he was never told that a wedding garment was necessary, for this was repeated to him at every sacramental solemnity. He cannot urge that one was never offered to him. 'Hearken to Me, ye that are stout-hearted, and far from righteousness; behold I bring near My righteousness, it shall not be far off, and My salvation, it shall not tarry.' 'O Jerusalem, wilt thou

be made clean; when shall it once be?' What can be more ample, or more urgent, than these calls of mercy? It is not the speechlessness of one who hath somewhat to urge, but is silent because he knows that his pleadings would be vain. It is the silence, not merely of nature overawed by majesty, but of conscious guilt and of utter despair. It is the silence of one that feels himself stripped of every plea and of every hope. Ye saints of God, into your mouth Jesus hath put the new song; and He hath taught you to order your cause before Him and to fill your mouths with arguments.

How solemn is the sentence of the convicted hypocrite, and how speedy is its execution! He cannot make a single effort, either to resist or to retard the execution of his sentence. So firm is the grasp which these servants will take of him, that no struggle can relieve him from it; and so great is the force with which they shall cast him forth, that he must fall down into the lowest hell. What a dreadful fall, from the society of the pious to the midst of the damned; and from the scene of gladness to the horrors of endless despair! God calls out of darkness into marvellous light; but from this outer darkness He will raise none. He looses the bands of the wretched, and sets the prisoners free; but these cords He will never break asunder. He wipes the tear from the eye of sorrow; but to this weeping He will put no end.

Is there at the communion table a single individual, whose conscience is now accusing him of unpardoned guilt and of a willing subjection to the thralldom of corruption? Let him listen to the thunder as it roars from Sinai, and magnify the patience of that God who hath not yet put this sentence in execution against him. Let him accept of the salvation which is offered him and submit to the righteousness of God, that the King may behold in him a trophy of His grace, and may receive the homage of the heart, where Satan thought He would be dishonoured by the traitor's kiss and by the traitor's praise.

How delightful is the language in which the character and the happiness of genuine saints are described! We feel that it is peculiarly so, when we contrast it with the awful representations of this parable. 'The King's daughter is all glorious within, and her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needle-work; the virgins, her companions that follow her, shall be brought unto Thee. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought; they shall enter into the King's palace.'

Bless His name for that distinguishing grace, which hath

been shown so abundantly to you. The presence of God is not the object of your fear, but of your desire. Instead of issuing this mandate to the angels, He will send them forth to take you by the hand and to lead you to the regions of light and gladness, 'where your sun shall no more go down, neither shall your moon withdraw its shining; where the Lord shall be your everlasting light, and the days of your mourning shall be ended.' There no suspicion and no dread of this question, shall ever enter into your minds, 'Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having on the wedding garment?' Instead of the voice of sorrow the shout shall be heard, 'Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted, that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.' Blessed are they which are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb. When you think on the horrors of that doom from which God hath saved you, and on the blessed hope to which you are raised, you will not deem any gratitude to Him too ardent, or any obedience too ample.

The King hath found you possessing the wedding-garment; but His eye hath beheld much imperfection in your graces and many corrupt principles in your hearts; and when He calls on you to answer for these, you are silent, for you feel you are very far from being so holy as you ought to be. You say with Job, 'Behold I am vile, what shall I answer? I will lay my hand on my mouth, and I will put my mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope.' 'But if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous' He will intercede for those, who, in the modesty and humiliation of true repentance, are ashamed to plead for themselves.

Let this parable teach you to beware of judging one another; for it is the province of the King to detect the hypocrite. It is not our duty, at the communion table, to call up to remembrance the faults of our brethren, but our own. In the procedure of the Almighty, mercy rejoiceth against judgment; and let this characterize, more than it hath ever yet done, our sentiments and conduct.

The lamentations which are made over the little care which is exercised to maintain the purity of Church communion, do not always flow from zeal for the Lord. Too often they are the effusions of party-spirit, or of a proud and censorious heart. 'Why dost thou judge thy brother, or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.' A man may go to the communion

table with the faith which can remove mountains ; with an intelligence to which mysteries are open ; with a zeal which courts death for the sake of the Gospel ; and with a hermit's abstraction from the cares and the pleasures of the world ; yet if he hath not charity, he is nothing.

I exhort parents, when they point out to their children the duty of showing forth the Lord's death, to teach them the necessity of their obtaining the righteousness and the Spirit of Christ ; and to urge their acceptance of these as offered to them in the Gospel. Then will they follow you to the Lord's table, to honour your common Friend and Saviour ; and when the King comes in to see the guests, He will rejoice in that union by which nature and grace have conjoined your hearts, and will make you doubly happy, happy in your own privileges and happy in the felicity of each other. ' O continue Thy loving-kindness with them that know Thee, and Thy righteousness with the upright in heart.'

ADDRESS XXXI.

This is Jesus the King of the Jews.—MATTHEW xxvii. 37.

It has been common with men in all ages, to form inscriptions on palaces and public buildings, on monumental pillars and tomb-stones. These inscriptions are intended to commemorate the exploits of the brave, the magnificence of the opulent, the researches of the learned, or the virtues of the good. They are read with eagerness by the men of that generation in which they are written ; and, in after ages, when they are in a great measure defaced by the hand of time, curiosity labours to decipher them, and glories in its success, if it is able, after many efforts, to accomplish it. Thus men act and thus they feel, though the person to whom these inscriptions refer stood in no relation to them ; and though the events to which they allude, yield to them no advantage. And shall the inscription on our Lord's cross be overlooked or forgotten ; an inscription which exhibits to us, in so lively and affecting a manner, man's only Saviour and eternal King ? The zeal which the curious show to find out the meaning of ancient inscriptions—the eagerness with which all run to read the epitaph which commemorates departed genius or worth—and the vast sums which superstition in its folly has expended in collecting and decorating the fancied relics of the cross—will condemn those who see nothing in the title placed above the head of a suffering Re-

deemer, that deserves their study, or that ministers to their improvement. Whatever might be Pilate's design in placing this inscription on the cross, Providence intended to promote by it many important purposes.

By this inscription, the attention of the vast multitude of strangers who were then present in Jerusalem, from all quarters of the civilized world, was strongly called to the pretensions and to the character of our Lord. John tells us that it was read by many of the Jews. A title so extraordinary, and which struck so powerful a chord of feeling in the heart of a Jew, must have excited a general curiosity and led to the most useful inquiries into our Lord's history. The information which they obtained, rivetted on their minds by the prodigies at His death, they would carry with them to the lands where they abode; and it would thus contribute to prepare the world for the triumphant progress of the apostles, when they came preaching Christ crucified. There are probably many in heaven, who, while they adore their Lord on the throne, rejoice that ever they saw Him on the cross, and say, 'It was there, O King, that my heart first felt Thy power; and it was there I first saw that name Jesus, which I will bless for ever and ever.'

This inscription was written in Greek, in Latin, and in Hebrew, to show that every language under heaven will exhibit the glory of Christ's kingdom, and the power of His grace. Though the words of eternal life were long confined to the classical languages of antiquity, yet in modern times many nations can now read in their own tongue the wonderful works of God. Piety is now employing its stores, and learning its skill and its efforts, in making known, by translations of the Scriptures, God's way upon the earth, and His saving health among the nations. The translations which have been already made, will remain as trophies of the religion and the munificence of British Christians, when the trophies of war have passed away. Who can think on the patience and labour that are necessary to acquire the uncouth and barbarous languages of savage tribes, the privations which must be endured, and the dangers which must be braved in imparting to them the knowledge of salvation, without feeling that the exertions of these pioneers of the Gospel cannot be too highly appreciated!

This inscription intimated the gracious designs of Heaven to the Jews. Though the Gospel dispensation was chiefly intended for the Gentiles, there is hope in its end for the Jews. Jesus will show Himself their King. He will not, indeed, appear as the temporal prince whom they have so long and so fondly expected; nor shall His victories be marked by the carnage and

the devastation of their oppressors. He shall reign in their hearts, and conquer their unbelief, carnality, and bigotry. He shall save them from enemies more cruel than any of the tyrants who have afflicted them; rule them with a sceptre more gracious than that of the monarchs whose names they so fondly cherish; and bestow on them an inheritance more glorious than they ever possessed in Palestine, and blessings more valuable than any that ever descended on the mountains of Zion. The children of Israel, and the children of Judah, shall return and seek the Lord their God, and David their King, and shall fear the Lord and His goodness. What a blessed change will this be, when He who is now the object of contempt and of enmity to the Jews, and at whose head they direct their blasphemies, shall see them bowing at His feet, glorying in His cross, and shouting Hosannahs!

This inscription was fixed on our Lord's cross, to show, that His kingdom is not a worldly one, that it has not for its ensigns the glittering baubles of earthly magnificence, and that it has not for its rewards the vain distinctions of earthly splendour. Thus we are taught, that through manifold tribulations the disciples of Jesus shall enter into the kingdom, and that patience and charity are their glory and their crown.

To the carnal mind these are hard sayings, but in your eyes are they reasonable and just? We must endure affliction, and conquer in death ere we can reign in bliss. It is not from the couch of indolence that men rise to everlasting rest. It is by our struggles with temptation and sorrow that our fidelity to our Master is tried, and that we are prepared for entering into His joy.

This inscription was fixed above our Lord's head, to show that His power was from on high, that the stone which the builders rejected was to become the head of the corner, that He was to have a name given Him superior to every name, and that He who comes from above is above all.

This inscription Pilate would not alter at the solicitations of the Jews. And what though the kings and rulers of the earth may say of Messiah the Prince, Let us break His bands asunder, and let us blot out His name from under heaven; He that sits on high shall hold them in derision; and this is His reply to the vain scoffs and threats of insolent impiety, 'yet have I set My King on My holy hill of Zion.'

It is an interesting circumstance, that the name Jesus, a Saviour, was conjoined by Pilate, in this inscription, with that of King. He is indeed a Prince and a Saviour; and delightful is the union of power and grace in His character. His

throne is a throne of grace, and His sceptre is a protecting sceptre. All the prerogatives of royalty, and all the spirit and deeds of a Saviour, are His. There have been kings whose empires, from the tyranny of their ruler, resembled a vast prison. Their parents shuddered to see their children rise to manhood, as marking them out for the destroyer; and beheld their fields flourish with a sigh, because they blossomed only for the spoiler. But the rule of Jesus is like a morning without clouds, and like tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain. To work salvation is the employment of His sceptre. The songs of salvation are His regal anthem; and the blessings of salvation are the gifts of His throne. 'The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King, and He will save us.'

Christians, have you taken Jesus for your King? Doth His excellence engross the affections and doth His law control the passions of your hearts? Are your opinions regulated by the word of Christ and not by the speculations of men, however ingenious, or the commandments of men, however venerable? Is your conduct regulated by His statutes and not by the maxims and customs of the world? Is this the request of your hearts, 'Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?' Is this your language, 'I will extol Thee, my God, O King; I will bless Thy name for ever and ever?' Jesus is King of the Jews. Are you Israelites indeed? 'He is not a Jew who is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that which is of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God.' Can you apply this description to yourselves? What do you know of the movements of the pious affections, and of that struggle with the corruptions of the heart which death only shall terminate? Have you crucified the flesh, with its affections and lusts? Regardless of the ridicule which may attach to you as precise and austere, as affecting superior sanctity, and showing more of the spirit of the Pharisee than that of the liberal-minded Christian, have you attached yourselves to the people that dwell alone, and do you refuse to follow the multitude in their follies? Is the reproach of Christ more pleasant to you than the flattering titles of the world, and, in your esteem, greater riches than all its treasure?—'He is thy Lord, and worship thou Him.' The King is approaching to see the guests. 'Lift up your heads, O ye gates! and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, that the King of Glory may come in.'

‘When the King sitteth at His table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof.’ ‘They have seen Thy goings, the steps of majesty of my God and my King, in the sanctuary.’ To you He hath spoken peace; and He hath blessed you by His smile. ‘Let Israel rejoice in Him that made him, let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.’ Lift up your eyes to heaven, and behold the name which He wears there. He hath a name written on His vesture, and on His thigh, ‘King of kings, and Lord of lords.’ Hear how His royalty is proclaimed, not by one contemptuous individual, but by adoring millions. ‘And I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.’ Nay, hearest thou not that voice which came again and again from the excellent glory, ‘Unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever?’ ‘The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at My right hand, till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool.’

Christians, have you no anthems to sing in honour of your King? ‘Hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.’ My heart indites a good matter concerning my Lord; and had I the harp and the ardour of an angel, this commandment would I glory to obey, ‘Sing praises to our King, sing praises.’

Let your lives be a practical testimony to the royalty of Christ. This is the language which He now addresses to you:— ‘My son, forget not My law, but let thine heart keep My commandments; for length of days, long life and peace, shall they add to thee. Let not mercy and truth forsake thee. Bind them about thy neck, write them on the tables of thy heart.’ These are the badges of honour worn by Christ’s subjects; these are the collars and the stars, the chains and the garters, which distinguish the excellent of the earth. How affectionate is the style of this injunction, ‘My son!’ Other kings have called themselves the fathers of their people, but how seldom have they deserved the title; but Jesus is the everlasting Father and the Prince of Peace. And when love thus mingles with authority, can you disobey?

Approve yourselves, then, the obedient subjects of your Lord. ‘The Lord our God will we serve, and His voice will we obey.’ Who is the man that you consider as the best subject of an earthly king? Is it the man whose zeal is confined to the loyalty of his toasts, and to the bitterness of his invectives against his prince’s enemies? Is it not the man who faith-

fully obeys the laws of the nation, and exerts himself to the utmost of his power to promote its peace, order, and prosperity? The worst enemies of religion, are those who, amid loud professions of zeal for its doctrines and its ordinances, trample on its precepts of sobriety, and justice, and truth. They make infidels represent Christianity as a religion which renders men hypocrites in the Church and knaves in society; while all who believe it, know that it sanctifies the heart for God and leads the steps in the paths of righteousness.

This inscription on the cross, calls on you to be zealous for the extension of our Lord's kingdom. 'Thy kingdom come,' is the prayer which He hath put into your mouths. It is not for the spread of a rule which carries terror, rapine, and degradation with it, that you pray; but for the diffusion of a power which ennobles the character, meliorates the condition, and brightens the prospects of man. Who would have thought, that zeal in such a cause would have been reviled by any who professed themselves friendly to the improvement of their species?

Remember, Christians, that on your cross there is an inscription placed by the hand of your Lord Himself: 'A companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.' Your enemies may ascribe your misfortunes to causes neither honourable to your prudence, nor your integrity, nor your diligence; but your righteousness shall be brought to the light, and your eyes shall see God's salvation. If we suffer in the spirit and according to the will of Christ, we shall also reign with Him.

At the communion table, place the crown of your salvation on the head of Jesus. What an interesting sight is this to the happy spirits in heaven, when the blessings of those that were ready to perish, the praises of the grateful, and the acclamations of the glowing heart, encircle the head of Jesus! Go forth, doth the Eternal say, 'O ye daughters of Zion, and behold your King with the crown wherewith His mother crowned Him in the day of His espousals, and in the day of the gladness of His heart.'

Pray for the approach of the period 'when the Saviour shall lift up His ensign on the mountains, and call the Jewish tribes, so long 'a nation scattered and peeled,' to rest and glory, and write upon them His new name. Then shall they tread the way to Zion, triumphing in Messiah's excellencies, rejoicing in the preciousness of His blood and in the grace of His throne, and calling to their Gentile brethren, 'O magnify the Lord with us, and let us exalt His name together.'

In the society of His enemies, be faithful to your King, and

give place to them by subjection, not even for a moment. Seasonable reproof, from a mouth opened with judgment, and a testimony to truth and virtue, from a tongue on which is the law of kindness, will put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, and may gain them to the wisdom of the just.

Let the afflictions of life be viewed as displays of the sovereignty of Jesus; and however much they may thwart your views and your wishes, 'Not my will, but Thine be done,' is the language that becomes you. By the murmurs of impatience, you rebel against Him, and by fretfulness of heart in trouble, you vex His Holy Spirit. In your conflict with the king of terrors, hold fast your faith in the Prince of Life; and commit your bodies to the grave, in the hope that here Jesus shall make known His power, His fidelity, and His love. Soon shall earth, and seas, and winds, give up their dead in obedience to Him; and 'then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of Hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and before His ancients gloriously.'

ADDRESS XXXII.

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?* that is to say, *My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?*—MATTHEW xxvii. 46.

FREQUENT are the complaints of dereliction which may be heard from the world around us. One complains that his wealth has departed from him, and that poverty hath come upon him like an armed man. Another laments the loss of health, and says, 'He will cut me off with pining sickness, from day even to night wilt Thou make an end of me;' while another mourns that his father and his mother have forsaken him, and that 'lover and friend are put far from him, and his acquaintance into darkness.' We hear those lamentations with pity, and sigh over the uncertainty of all earthly blessings. But how different are the feelings with which we ought to listen to our Lord's complaint of desertion; for the anguish which it indicates far exceeds all other sorrow in severity and horror, and it was for our sake and in our stead that it was endured.

Meditate, my Christian brethren, on the principle which prompted our Lord to submit to this anguish. It was love, and you may judge of the strength and the generosity of that love, by the joy which was relinquished, and by the pangs which were endured. The loving-kindness of God is better than life,

and the sense of it Jesus consented to forego for a season. The anger of God, which is worse than death, He was willing to endure, in order to restore the wretched outcast to His Father's house. Had it not been for this love, that cross would never have been endured, that complaint would never have been uttered, and that heart would never have been broken. I trust there is not one at that table unimpressed by this love, nor one that does not wish to feel it more strongly and fully. If you would have this wish gratified, keep the eye of your faith fixed on the suffering Redeemer, and on the anguish that is swelling in His heart, and implore a greater degree of Divine illumination. There is nought respecting Christ, which the Holy Ghost shows with more delight to the hearts of the disciples, than His expiatory sufferings and matchless love. In His light you will see more to astonish and melt you in this scene than ever. 'I have been young,' said David, 'and now am old, yet have I never seen the righteous man forsaken.' 'Israel hath not been forsaken, nor Judah of His God, though the land be filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel;' yet here the Holy Redeemer groans, and bleeds, and dies, without an expression of sympathy from earth, or a look of love from heaven. Admire that love which all the sorrows of His heart could not enfeeble, and which you now behold shining in glory amidst all the darkness of His desertion, and mingling its animating power with all the sad emotions of His soul.

I exhort you who are now happy in the presence of God, to walk humbly with Him. If you are tempted to be proud because of the abundance of your revelations, think on the darkness which was spread over the Saviour's soul, and this will repress all the emotions of self-complacency, and fill you with that adoring wonder and gratitude which, while it abases you in your own eyes, will exalt you in His. To those who are now lamenting that the Comforter who could have relieved their soul, is far away, I would say, it becomes not you to use this language, Why hast Thou forsaken me, for 'your iniquities have separated betwixt you and your God, and have provoked Him to withdraw Himself, and to withhold good things from you.' Abandon the follies which have brought on you this misery, and pray for His return in earnest desire and in humble hope. Let the weeping eye be raised to Him, and the hands which hang down be lifted to Him, and He will surely visit you.

Let the gracious presence of God be carefully improved. Fear not affliction, for by the candle of the Lord you shall walk safely through the darkness. Let this encourage you in duty,

that the joy of the Lord shall be your strength ; and let it dispose you to commiserate the deserted, and to labour to revive their hope in God. Let it render you superior to the vain delights of a present world. Compared with the joys of God's presence, or the horrors of His absence, what are its smiles? or what are its frowns? Thus you may recommend religion to others, and tell them how happy it makes you. When you return from the mount, where you have been with God, let your faces shine with the lustre of gentleness and charity.

Adhere steadily and affectionately to your God, and never forget the solemn pledges which you have this day made to your Redeemer, of obedience to all His laws. Think it not enough that you abstain from gross acts of injustice or sensuality, for religion is dishonoured by slothful habits in its professors, by their embarrassments arising from their living beyond their income, by foolish talking, a censorious temper, and a niggardly spirit. Remember that purity is the best ornament of youth, and patience the best prop of age ; that equity is the credit of the master, and fidelity that of the servant ; that contentment is the wealth of the poor, and humility the glory of the prosperous ; and that this is the bliss of a family when its character is ' The Lord is there.'

And, now in parting with you, I would address to you that animating promise of God, with which you may welcome any solitude, any duty, and any tribulation. ' My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest.' Strength and life, peace and joy, grace and glory, are in His presence. This, O Christian, shall be the name, which to the praise of His grace you shall wear for ever, ' Sought out and not forsaken.' Your support in affliction, your deliverance from trouble, your recovery from backsliding, and your safety in death, shall evince its truth, and it shall shine on your vesture for ever in that world where the Lord shall be your everlasting light, and your God your glory. Amen.

ADDRESS XXXIII.

And, behold, the vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.—MATTHEW xxvii. 51.

THE rending of this vail was one of the many memorable circumstances which attended the crucifixion of our Lord. From its extent and thickness, from the shortness of the time which had elapsed since its suspension, and from the manner in which

it was protected from the weather and from violence, the rending of it, thus instantaneous and total, could only have been effected by the power of God. Most important are the truths which this event exhibits.

By the rending of this vail, Providence intimated that the ceremonial dispensation was abolished. With vigilant care was the most Holy Place kept sacred from all intrusion. Into it none were permitted to enter except the High Priest, and he only once in the year. Now it is thrown open to public view, and in a short time after this the abomination of desolation stood in the midst of it; around the mercy-seat, the blood of the slain flowed, and with their ashes its ruins were mingled. 'Behold, Christians, the goodness and the severity of God; on them which fell severity, but towards you goodness.' He hath given you a nail in His holy place; and His promise to the Christian Church is, 'Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.' This holy temple its enemies shall never destroy, this Jerusalem they shall never lay on heaps, and this Mount Zion they shall never plough like a field.

In the rending of this vail, we behold a token of the union of Jews and Gentiles in one Church. The obstacles to this union were removed by the death of Christ. 'It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to the dogs,' were the words of our Lord to the Syrophenician woman, speaking according to the spirit and views of the Jews, for the trial of her faith. But is this the way in which He speaks to you? No. 'Eat, O friends; drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved.' Boast not, O ye Jews, as if to us there was no sacrifice for sin; Christ is the propitiation for sins, and not for yours only, but for the sins of the whole world. Boast not as if we had no mercy-seat to come to, for we are invited to approach a throne of grace, where we may obtain mercy and find grace to help us in the time of need. Boast not as if we had no interest in the ark of the covenant; for God has promised, and how amply is He fulfilling it—'I will call them My people which were not My people, and her beloved which was not beloved.' The Gentiles, who inherited lies and vanity, are now possessors of the sure mercies of David. Boast not as if we were strangers to the cloud of glory; for the white cloud fills our temples, and our enraptured hearts exclaim, 'God is here!' I present to you, Christians, the affecting recollections mentioned by the Apostle Paul, and review them with humility, gratitude, and joy. 'Wherefore, remember that ye, being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the cove-

nants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances, for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace, and that He might reconcile both to God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby; and came and preached peace to you that were afar off, and to them that were nigh; for through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.'

The rending of this vail was an emblem of the heavenly sanctuary being now laid open to us. It is now made manifest by our Lord's appearing, who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel. Now the mists are scattered which rested on the verdant hills of the better country, its paradise, its temple, and its river of life; and they are exhibited to our view, to give vigour to our hope, fervour to our gratitude, and animation to our pursuit of things above. Cherubim and a flaming sword guarded the way to the earthly paradise, and the vail of the temple had a similar use under the old dispensation, with regard to the symbols of the Divine presence; but there is nought to prevent our approach to heaven, or to debar us from entering into the holiest of all. 'Having, therefore, brethren; boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us through the vail, that is to say, His flesh; and having an High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.'

Now, Christians, doth not this rent vail teach you to contemplate the death of Christ with a broken heart? Shall your hearts be stone, when the Saviour's body and heart are broken? The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, the torn heart He will heal, and the wounded spirit He will bind up. Now let your cry be, 'O that Thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down, and make the mountains to flow away at Thy presence!' Scatter every thing that separates betwixt Thee and my soul. Shine forth, O Thou that dwellest between the cherubim, before angels, devils, and men; before angels, that they may rejoice at it; devils, that they may tremble; and men, that they may glorify our Father who is in heaven. Stir up Thy strength, O God; come and save us.

‘We all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.’ Bless God that you live under the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ. Think with pity on the Jews. ‘Even to this day the vail is upon their hearts; nevertheless when they shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away.’ O what a triumph will it be to the cross, when its inveterate enemies shall fall before it, and when that which is now to them a stumbling-block shall be their chief joy, and their only hope! That generous Saviour, who wept over their fatal blindness, will assuredly rejoice when they shall remember and turn to the Lord, and when the loud and bitter cry, ‘Away with Him, away with Him,’ shall be succeeded by the claim, ‘My Lord and my God!’

Rejoice, Christians, in the merciful designs of heaven, with regard to the Gentile nations. ‘He will destroy the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations.’ The light of salvation shall visit the dark places of the earth; the devices of superstition to keep the human mind in subjection to its fooleries, shall be exposed to the contempt of all; the smoke of the pit shall be driven away from around them, and ‘the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.’ ‘They shall fear the name of the Lord from the west.’ The regions of liberty and science shall wait for His law. They shall hail His glory from the rising of the sun; and the mosques of the false prophet and the temples of the heathen, shall be cleansed for His altars and His spiritual worship.

Let your hope enter within the vail, in the full and delightful anticipation of your speedy admission. And is this the only grace which should enter it? No. Let love enter within the vail, and say, ‘Whom have I in heaven but Thee!’ Let faith enter within it, and say, ‘I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.’ Let patience enter, and behold the good resting from their sorrows; let gratitude enter, and take up its song and its harp; let humility enter, and see how all its honours are devoted to Jesus; and let charity enter, and mark how, amidst all the varieties in character, origin, and glory among its inhabitants, there is but one heart. Let desire enter, and say, O when shall I come and appear before God! and let joy enter, and taste of its rivers of pleasure. Soon shall the period arrive of your actual admission. The Forerunner has entered for you; and as you would wish that your entrance should not be with fear and trembling, with doubt and hesitation, ‘give all diligence to make your calling

and election sure, and then there shall be administered to you an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of your Lord and Saviour.' There you shall find a temple without a veil, a church without spot, day without night, worship without a pause, youth without decay, happiness without measure, and glory without end. Manifest a respect, high, constant, and universal, to the commandments of God. 'Blessed are they who do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and enter in through the gates into the city.'

ADDRESS XXXIV

And the earth did quake, and the rocks rent.—MATTHEW xxvii. 51.

THE deaths of some persons who have made a great figure in the world have been represented as attended with wonderful prodigies. Nature has been exhibited as attesting, by tempests and inundations, her interest in the warrior's fall, and showing by the strife of elements, the influence of such events on the moral world. But it is easy to perceive in such narratives the art of a venal flatterer, inventing what might aggrandize the event; or the simplicity of ignorance magnifying an uncommon incident into something supernatural. The swell of the language proves the labour and design of the poet and the historian to give exalted ideas of the scene, and to produce in the minds of strangers and of posterity, the deepest interest in the fate of their favourite heroes.

How different is the statement which we have in Scripture of the wonders which were exhibited at the death of Christ! These were grand beyond all that imagination had ever arrayed round the warrior's bier, and they are related with that brevity and simplicity which strike us as the characters of truth. What human genius would have represented in long and pompous descriptions, the Evangelists relate in a few words, and leave it to the majesty of the scene to fill the soul with astonishment and awe.

In contemplating the quaking of the earth and the rending of the rocks when Jesus died, you behold the importance of that event attested which you are now commemorating. It is an event whose influence is spread over all the ways of God, over all places of His dominion, and over all the ages of eternity; and while its power to save was proclaimed by all the orders of the blessed, and its power to destroy felt by all the legions of devils, Jehovah intended by this convulsion of nature

to direct to it, and to fix on it, the solemn contemplation of all human beings. These were not signs given by nature that all was lost, but stupendous indications that the power of darkness was broken, and that the creature made subject to vanity should be released and renovated. The death of Christ is to you a cause of triumph, and that deserves not the name of a Christian assembly, or a Christian heart, where it is forgotten; but while you glory in the cross, you are taught by this incident to mingle with your exultation a holy awe.

Let me call on you, Christians, to adore the power of your God, as displayed in this earthquake. It is He who shakes the earth out of its place, and the pillars thereof tremble, who overturns the mountains, and seals up the stars. Yet think not of Him with the slavish dread which forgets or disbelieves His goodness amidst the thunders of His power, for He will bind up the bruised reed, and keep in perfect peace the heart that trusts in Him. Remembering your Saviour's death, you can sing in every convulsion of nature, and in every shock of adversity, 'God is our refuge and our strength, therefore will not we fear though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.' It is a peculiarity of this sign at the death of Christ, that its tokens remain to this day. The darkness passed away before the returning sun, the vail of the temple perished in the flames which consumed that edifice, and the graves were soon closed on other inhabitants; but the fissures of those rocks which are still visible, are of such a form and size as attest that they must have been produced in some awful convulsion. These rents have been often contemplated with the eye of curiosity, and superstition hath debased a scene where the Lord 'made bare His holy arm;' but let it be your exercise to reflect on it with pious wonder, and to search out the various truths, and changes, and warnings which it was intended to indicate.

This quaking of the earth, and this rending of the rocks, were an awful rebuke to the stupidity and obduracy of the Jews. We are ready to imagine that the humility and beneficence of our Lord would have softened prejudice and enmity into love; but the stronger His claims were to their affection, the more fiercely did they persecute Him, and the more powerfully His sufferings pleaded for their pity, the more vehement was their malice, and the more barbarous their insults. While the most atrocious criminal is pitied by the spectators, when he undergoes the sentence of the law, nought was heard around the cross of our Lord but the language of bitter derision. The supplications of the dying criminal are accompanied in their

ascent to heaven by the ejaculations of multitudes; but the prayers of Jesus were turned to His shame, and the taunts of the base scoffer were the only return which was made to His groans. Now, as if inanimate nature had been endowed with more sensibility than these men, the earth quaked and the rocks were rent.

Christians, you are ashamed and grieved on account of the hardness of your hearts, and ye are praying earnestly for a tender and melting spirit. Your complaints and supplications are a proof that you are not utter strangers to pious feeling; but, conscious of its weakness, and dreading His rebukes, beseech Him to touch your hearts with that influence of the cross which softens and purifies. Look to that quaking earth and to these rending rocks, and behold a pledge of that energy which shall surround His table with broken and contrite spirits.

This earthquake was an indication of the utter abolition of the Jewish state and system. The perpetuity of these was the dearest hope of the Jews, and they had seen the injuries done to them by the Romans with indignation and horror. They flattered themselves that Messiah would quickly appear to drive these oppressors from their land, and to make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. It was the idea that our Lord was an enemy to their state and system, which exasperated them against Him, and they thought that His death would establish Judah as in the days of old. But at that hour the glory departed from their temple, and there was a voice which cried in the rending of these rocks, 'The kingdom of God is taken from you, and given to a nation that shall bear the fruit thereof.' The oblation on the cross had rendered their sacrifices unnecessary, their carnal ordinances were to be succeeded by a more simple homage, their bells and trumpets by the word of salvation, and their covenant of peculiarity was now utterly disannulled. In vain did they try to uphold what God had doomed to fall. At the appointed moment it tumbled down, and its blind and furious votaries were crushed in its ruins.

There is a time predicted when the Jews shall, by subjection to Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified, be relieved from the curse which has been lying on them for ages. They shall come not to the smoke of incense, the blood of bulls and goats, narrow prejudices, and burdensome ceremonies, but to the power of prayer, and to the blood of the Lamb, to expanded charity, and to the easy yoke of evangelical obedience.—Anticipate this long expected event as a bright triumph to your Lord, and as life from the dead to the Gentile world.

The earthquake was a pledge of the changes which were to be introduced into the Gentile world by the Gospel. It was a most solemn assurance, that every system of doctrine, polity, or worship, which stood in its way, should be broken in pieces. No Pagan temple could resist His fury who had ploughed Zion like a field, no city of defence could withstand His power who had laid Jerusalem in ruins, and no crowd of foes can abide before Him who has made the solemn assembly as the high places of the forest.

The rending of these rocks intimated that the water of life was now to flow among the heathen, to refresh fainting multitudes, to wash away the pollutions of the nations, and to make the desert to blossom. How delightful is it to behold Jehovah making life to flow from the death of the cross, and bringing everlasting righteousness from the scene of blood! Here we see, that though the hearts of Gentile sinners might be ever so hardened, His grace should make them yield. Hearts sunk in sensuality have been inclined to self-denial; men, shameless and audacious in sin, have wept and trembled in godly sorrow; and sottish idolators have been led in enlightened piety to the throne of grace.

Rejoice, my friends, in the better state of things which has succeeded the Jewish polity, and pray for its universal extension. Happy are ye in the liberty with which Christ hath made you free, and in the light which He hath spread around you. In beholding our country so improved by culture, and so enriched by commerce, we think with wonder, that where the corn now waves, was once a heath or a forest, and that cities, the seats of trade or science, occupy the place where wild beasts roamed. But the Gospel has produced a change far more important and blissful. Religion spreads her treasures of wisdom, and her institutions of piety and mercy over the scene of ignorance, vice, and misery, and her power is felt, and her worship is rising in districts which had been for ages devoted to superstition. Beware of doubting the universal prevalence of this religion on account of the enemies that oppose its progress; for 'every valley shall be exalted, and every hill and mountain shall be laid low, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.' Let the purity, the liberality, and the zeal of your conduct, be suited to the privileges you enjoy, and to the hope of your calling. The question, what do ye more than others? suggests the obligation of superior activity on your part in the service of your Redeemer. I hope you feel it and will be zealous in good works.

Rejoice that Christ died thus, that He might obtain for you a peaceful end. When the wicked man dies, the heavens reveal his iniquity and the earth rises up against him. Often have the ungodly been seen quaking in every limb, their faces covered with blackness and their breasts heaving with agony. But the good man dies in peace; the earth opens, but it is to give him a place of rest in her bosom; the hearts of his friends are torn with grief, but there is a Comforter whose office it is to bind them up. And when the heavens and the earth shall flee away from the face of Him that sits on the throne; and when the creation, which was convulsed at the purchase of redemption, shall be dissolved at its consummation, ye shall stand unshaken on the Rock of Ages, and reign with Christ for ever in a kingdom that cannot be moved. Amen.

ADDRESS XXXV.

And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.—MATTHEW xxvii. 52, 53.

DEATH terminates the power of man. Affection or vanity may deck the sepulchre with the ensigns of glory or dominion, art may check the progress of corruption on the body, and genius give the brightest lustre to the name; but to deliver from the grave is a work too mighty for the power of creatures to accomplish. When kings die, the chambers of the dead are opened, the coffins where sleep the mighty of former ages are exposed to the view of the curious, and a place is prepared beside them, to which the recent victim of death is conveyed with solemn pomp; but the dead are not stirred up for them to meet them at their coming. In barbarous ages the funerals of princes and warriors have been solemnized with rites of blood; numbers of captives have been sacrificed at their tombs; and the ceremonies of mourning, which should have softened the heart, have been closed with deeds of horrid cruelty.

But how different is the influence of the death of Christ! When He gave up the ghost, multitudes were quickened who were mouldering in their graves. To this wondrous event your attention is now turned. Ye are strangers, we trust, to the incredulity which says, How could these things be? and to the indifference which says, What are they to us? Providence intended them to honour the death of His Son, and to confirm our hopes that this mortal shall put on immortality?

Those who were raised were probably persons who had known our Lord, and whose relatives and acquaintances, living in Jerusalem, felt assured when they saw them that there was no deception in this scene. They were holy persons, and, on account of their eminence in piety, were made the subjects of this astonishing miracle. God sometimes employs in the present state, wicked men as the messengers of His will; but there is no instance in Scripture which warrants us to suppose that He will call them from the abodes of darkness to declare His wonders.

They were many in number. This made the miracle more striking, and increased the evidence of it. Raised by the same power, sent on the same errand, and to the same place, how tender would be their interest in each other, and how solemn their united testimony! Had a few been sent from the tomb to bear witness to the power of Jesus, the rulers might have tried various plans to discredit or suppress their testimony, but the voice of many speaking with the majesty of immortals, must have filled them with consternation.

How pleasing is the view given of their state while in the grave,—‘They slept.’ Released from their labours and sorrows, and insensible to the bustle and distraction of this vain world, they had entered into rest. By their removal before the crucifixion of our Lord, they had been spared those pangs which His surviving friends felt when they saw Him passing through the scene of suffering.

From this sleep of death they arose. In great earthquakes the bodies of the living are swallowed up, but this earthquake at the death of Jesus opened the gate of their tombs, and said to these prisoners, ‘Go forth.’ Sometimes the bodies of the dead have been torn from their graves by barbarous men, whose cruelty could not be satiated by the abuse of the living, but it is unconscious dust that is moved from its place. But though the bodies of these saints were putrid and decayed, they were endowed with life, soundness, and vigour.

These saints abode among the monuments till our Lord rose, when they went into the city, and bore their testimony to His glory, and to the powers of the world to come, and this they did to many. It is not likely that they remained long on earth, or that they returned to their graves; but from their fellowship with Christ in His resurrection, we may suppose that when He was received up into glory they ascended with Him to heaven. Some may imagine that they would have been peculiarly fitted for declaring the salvation of Christ among the Gentiles, but it was more for the glory of God, and for the encouragement

of man, that this should be done by persons encompassed with infirmities, and liable to mortality.

But let your meditations turn to the glorious things which were intimated by this surprising event. It was a convincing token of Christ's complete victory over death. This was an enemy to whom all had been constrained to bow. The ingenuity of man could devise no way of escape, nor could his power oppose to him any effectual resistance. It was one great end of our Lord's appearance to destroy this enemy, and what friend of man will not bless Him for the generous attempt? To accomplish this design, He assumed our nature, and lived and died, that by His obedience and death He might expiate the guilt which made us liable to everlasting misery, and procure for us eternal felicity in soul and body. Behold as evidences that this object has been gained, these saints, rising from their graves, their souls perfect in holiness united to bodies incorruptible, and proclaiming with tongues framed for the high praises of God, 'That the plague of death and the destruction of the grave was come.' It was by them that song was first raised which hath so often expressed the gratitude and the joy of Christians, and how interesting does it seem while sung by persons ransomed from the grave, around the cross and tomb of Him who died and rose a conqueror, 'O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory?' The keys of hell and of death were now put into the Mediator's hands, and His first employment of them was the release of these saints. Light arose on the land of darkness, and the Tree of Life hath ever since flourished in its borders. When Samson died, thousands of the Philistines perished with him, and those whom he slew at his death were more than those whom he had slain in his life; but when Jesus died, many were made alive. His stripes are our health, His conflicts our victory, and His death our life. That Saviour who thus signalized His death, will, I trust, distinguish the commemoration of it this day by the manifestation of His gracious energy in every heart at His table. We look not for it in the graves around us, but in our hearts, and their hope of it shall not be disappointed, who are now saying with pious desire, 'O let my soul live and it shall praise Thee.'

The resurrection of these saints was a powerful means of conviction afforded to the Jews. When we think on their disregard of the ministry and the miracles of our Lord, we are ready to suppose that God would have finally abandoned them. But instead of doing this, at the very time when His blood had been shed by their wicked hands, God sent these messengers

from the tombs that they might look on Him whom they had pierced, and mourn. 'Ye denied the Holy One and the Just,' did they say, 'and desired a murderer to be granted unto you, and killed the Prince of Life whom God hath raised from the dead, whereof we are witnesses.' It was the generosity which dictated His prayer for His murderers, which sent them these monitors, and ordered Apostles to follow them, saying, 'Unto you, God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you by turning every one of you away from your iniquities.'

Behold, Christians, grace much more abounding where sin abounded, and call to your remembrance the manner in which God waited to be gracious to you. Many were the means of conviction which you slighted; and when He might justly have given you over to a reprobate mind, He still strove with you, till at length your soul was won. O let a deep regret for the time you have lost, animate you to double your diligence in the service of God, and encourage you to persevere in your efforts to reclaim the most stubborn from sin and folly. But the resurrection of these saints was also a pledge of that spiritual vivification which was to be effected by the Gospel. At this period the nations of the world were sunk in spiritual death. So vain had former efforts been to restore them, that it was with almost no hope that the question was asked, 'Can these dry bones live?' When Jesus was suspended on the cross, and cast His eyes over the nations, and beheld them dead in trespasses and sins, He lifted up His voice and cried, 'Come from the four winds, O breath of the Lord, and blow on these slain that they may live.' That cry, 'Father, the hour is come,' was thus answered, 'The hour cometh, and now is, wherein the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.' By the ministry of the Apostles multitudes passed from death to life, the hideous workings of moral depravity were succeeded by the beauties of holiness, the excess of riot by strict temperance and cheerful self-denial, and the horrible forebodings of condemnation and misery, by the lively hope of mercy and felicity. I trust you have experienced His quickening power. These saints were made alive at the same time, and by the same means, and the life they had was the same in degree; but ye were quickened at different periods, and by various methods, and in some the spiritual life is more vigorous than in others. These saints had their life from Christ on the cross, you have it from Christ on the throne. Let those in whom the spiritual life is vigorous have their devotion elevated, their faith steadfast, and their love fervent; and let not those who are feeble and languid say, 'Our bones are dried, and our

hope is lost,' but let them say, 'Wilt Thou not revive us again that our hearts may rejoice in Thee?' If His quickening power remained with Him in the last and lowest depth of His humiliation, you cannot suppose that His hand is now shortened that it cannot save.

But let me add, that the event you have been contemplating was a pledge of the blessed resurrection of the just. The few instances of a resurrection which had already occurred, could not be expected to preclude all anxiety and doubt on a point so momentous. The heart might be ready to suggest that a resurrection may be the privilege of a chosen few; but multitudes, and I among the rest, may be doomed never to return from the dust. But behold this large company of saints arising, and rejoice in hope that He shall quicken your mortal bodies. When our Saviour was expiring on the cross, He cast His eyes over the sepulchres of Jerusalem where the saints slept on whom His power was now to operate, and said, 'Thy dead men shall live, together with My dead body shall they arise; awake and sing ye that dwell in the dust, for your dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast forth her dead.' I call on you to rejoice in the hope of an event which so many examples render credible. You have seen the tree which was cut down sprouting again, and marked the influence of the spring over the grass and humble flowers of the turf which is spread over the grave, and even these things teach you that the bones of the dead shall flourish as an herb, and that their darkness shall be as the noon-day.

How soothing is the view which you may take of your departed friends—they are saints asleep in Jesus. Ye have carried them to their graves, but God shall bring them again from the dust, and they shall meet you with countenances bright with the lustre of immortality, yet bearing the wonted expression of love.

Be not ashamed of the testimony of our Lord. Let the lips which He has opened show forth His praise, and the heart which He hath quickened suggest a good matter concerning Him. Think of the courage with which these saints went into the city, where our Lord's enemies, whose hands were still reeking with His blood, bore the sway, and be not afraid to confess your Lord. While the tongues of the living were reviling His Son, God brought from the house of silence witnesses to His glory. Let your prayers be pure, fervent, and charitable, like the prayers of the saints, your faith active, and your patience steadfast like theirs.

Approve yourselves the children of the resurrection. When

your friends have served their generation, and are fallen asleep, rejoice in the hopes of what Christ will do for them. While you mourn that one so amiable and useful now dwells in the dust, and mark the stillness of the peaceful grave, there is a voice which mingles with your lamentations, and says, 'Our friend Lazarus sleepeth, and I go to awake him out of his sleep.' Approve yourselves the children of the resurrection, by the calmness with which you contemplate the traces of mortality in your nature. When the pale countenance, the freezing blood, and the trembling limbs, indicate that the winter of your life is come, rejoice in hope of that spring which shall make all things new. As becometh the children of the resurrection, die in the faith. These beds are beds of dust, but the flesh rests there in hope. The Holy City is before you, let your prayers and praises enter it, and let them tell what you wish to be and shall be there. The thought now impresses you, How much will I have to say to the praise of my Saviour on high. My comforts I will ascribe to His bounty, my honours I will lay at His feet, and on His head the blessings of my soul shall be for ever coming. The chief of sinners saved by grace shall with most wonder and joy sing, 'Salvation to our God that sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.' Now may the Lord establish your hearts unblameable in holiness till the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints. Amen.

ADDRESS XXXVI.

And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye : for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.—MATTHEW xxviii. 5.

THESE are the words with which the angel calmed the minds of the pious women who had come to pay the last offices of respect to our Lord's body. When they beheld the consternation of the keepers, the glory of the heavenly messenger, and the tomb of Jesus open, they were filled with anxiety and dismay. While the Roman guards were left to the gloomy suggestions of their own minds, the angel addressed these disciples in language kind and animating ; and the view which he gives of their exercise, and the encouragement which he suggests to them, are admirably adapted for the instruction and comfort of the devout communicant.

These persons sought our Lord with affection. The love which we bear to our friends expresses itself in a variety of ways, after their departure. We mourn beside their dust,

feel a melancholy pleasure in the tender recollections which that spot cherishes, and anticipate the time when the same turf or stone shall cover us. These pious women came to our Saviour's tomb with costly spices and ointments, after the custom of the East, to anoint His body, and to scatter over the sepulchre. Their thoughts, their affection, and their happiness, had gone down with Him to the grave; and the corpse of their dearest friend had more power to attract them than all that the land of the living contained.

Christians, ye seek not a dead, but a living Saviour. You seek Him not in the house of silence, but in the temple which He fills with His glory. You have not come to cast a last look on His countenance, once so amiable, but now so ghastly, or to anoint Him with spices, but to beseech Him to cause His face to shine upon you, and to receive 'an unction from the Holy One.' You are influenced by pious attachment, I trust, in thus seeking Him; and when you meet Him, and hold Him by the feet, or grasp the hem of His garment, you will be able to say, 'Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee.'

Courage was conspicuous in the conduct of these disciples. They knew that the followers of our Lord were at that time the objects of suspicion, and had reason to dread the malice and power of His enemies, yet this did not deter them from showing a deep interest in His fate. They knew also that the tomb was surrounded by Roman soldiers, and it was probable, that instead of being allowed to pay their tribute of affection unmolested, they would be repulsed with rudeness and barbarity. Besides, the morning was only beginning to dawn, and they were much less likely to meet with protection from the ill-usage of the base, than if the day had been advanced. I may add, that there is something in the sight of a dead body and of the interior of a sepulchre, which awakens feelings of horror; yet attachment raised them superior to these causes of fear, and steeled their hearts with courage.

You have not such dangers to brave in your duty; but there are many things which require you to arm yourselves with their mind. The corruptions of the heart will throw obstacles in your way; and some have had to break through the opposition of friends and relatives in seeking Jesus, in places against which they were irritated by bigotry and prejudice, or in duties which impiety led them to condemn. Your spiritual enemies will try to seduce your hearts from the Saviour by their allurements; and if these do not succeed, they will bring former sins to remembrance, to fill you with

terror ; they will suggest to your minds such thoughts as will harass or shock you, and alarm you with the idea of your eating and drinking damnation to yourselves ; but none of these things must move you, and you must go on in the strength of the Lord God.

How zealous were these disciples ! Many in their situation would have thought that they had sufficiently proved their zeal, by witnessing His crucifixion, where none of the apostles were present save John ; that Joseph and Nicodemus had done the body of our Lord all necessary honour ; and that, if more was requisite, the disciples should come forward and show their repentance for their base desertion. But instead of reasoning in this manner, they procured a large quantity of spices and ointments, and instead of waiting till the disciples came to accompany them, or till they were apprised that they might go forward in safety, when the Sabbath was ended they set out with eagerness on this labour of love.

In this spirit you must seek the honour of your Lord. Imagine it not an excuse for sloth on your part, that others are careless. Shall your Master's honour lie in the dust, because those who should raise it put not forth their hands, and because those who should plead for it are silent ? This is an opportunity for you to show that you have another spirit in you, and that you are determined to follow the Lord fully.

You cannot imagine that sufficient honours are done to His name, or that sufficient efforts are made in His cause. That name is exalted above all blessing and praise, and that cause deserves the utmost energies of every creature. Think not that amidst the acclamations of thousands, your hosannahs will be dispensed with, and that amidst the gold of the wealthy in His treasury He will not look for your mite, for He will make inquiry after the offering of the poor, and regard the sigh of the feeble-minded.

These disciples sought Him with sorrow. Memory was employed in setting before them the excellencies of the Friend they had lost, and the sufferings in which He had expired ; and, forgetting His promises of His resurrection, they said, in the despondency of their hearts, 'I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord, in the land of the living.' They had spent a mournful Sabbath ; and during the two dreadful nights which had passed since Jesus died, they had watered their couch with their tears. This sorrow was permitted to overwhelm them, that their meeting with our Saviour after His resurrection might be more exquisitely tender and pleasing.

You have not their causes of sorrow ; but you have reason

to mourn that you are so unprepared to meet Him, that you are seeking Him so coldly, and that your past conduct has been such as to suggest the most painful fears that Jesus will not draw near you. Godly sorrow is as pleasing to Christ as the rapture of angels; and at His table He will relieve the heart that is oppressed with this grief. If ye have come to His table with this sorrow ye shall return with peace. To feel His hand wiping away our tears, to hear His voice assuring us of forgiveness, and to find His comforts gladdening our souls, must yield a pleasure which can only be exceeded in the acquittal of judgment, and in the blessedness of heaven.

Christians, your affectionate inquiries after your Lord are marked in heaven. Jesus knows the true character and motives of His worshippers. The men of the world may suppose that your services are but an empty form, and that your hearts are as much strangers to the feelings of devotion as theirs; but you can appeal from censure so uncharitable and so presumptuous, to Him who searches the heart, and say, 'With my soul have I desired Thee in the night season, and with my spirit within me I have sought Thee early.' He knows your secret struggles with corrupt principles, your devout wishes and holy purposes, and He will aid you in mortifying the deeds of the body, and cherish every virtuous emotion.

But consider that your languid feelings, and your backsliding in heart must be known to Him also, and the intimation of this will cover you with confusion. Happy is he to whom the Redeemer is not called to say, 'When thou wast on the bed of sloth, and in the scene of folly, I saw thee;' and more happy still is he whom He can address thus, 'When thou wast at My cross washing thy robes in My blood, and when thou wast in the scene of active duty, I beheld thee.' Enthusiasts may mistake the phantom which is formed by their own fancy for a messenger from heaven; but the pious are under no delusion when they say, 'God Almighty met with me, and blessed me.'

Ye who have been seeking Jesus who was crucified, have no cause for fear. What is it that terrifies you in the exercises of the sanctuary? Is it the glory to which Jesus is now raised? His heart is the same on the throne as on the cross. The mercy which shed so sweet a lustre round the cross, is now one of the bright ornaments of His throne. Is it the opposition of your enemies that alarms you? They were vanquished when your Lord was crucified; and by the blood

of the Lamb you shall be more than conquerors. Is it the consciousness of guilt that troubles you? He will not punish you for that for which He bled and died. Are you afraid that the folly, and the inconsistency of your hearts, will induce Him to abandon you? Such fears show that you are jealous of yourselves; but there is virtue in the cross to enlighten you in all wisdom, and to confirm you in all goodness. Do you fear that the gloom on your spirits, in consequence of afflicting dispensations, will unfit you for His service? 'The way of the Lord is strength to the upright.' And do the terrors of death and judgment agitate you? Behold in Jesus, who was crucified, a hope for the one, which shall not make you ashamed, and a plea for the other, which shall not fail you.

Meditate on the assurances with which the Scripture abounds of God's care and mercy to them that seek Him. 'The meek shall eat, and be satisfied; they shall praise the Lord that seek Him; your hearts shall live for ever. They that seek the Lord shall want nothing that is good.' I do not say that you shall want nothing which you deem good; for fancy is often misled, and the humours of the heart are foolish and wayward; but you shall be denied nothing which God sees to be necessary to your welfare.

If, as I trust is the case, you have met with the Saviour whom you sought at His table, consider that this is a privilege of which you are altogether unworthy, and provoke Him not to leave you by a presumptuous and wandering heart. If other objects solicit you to pursue them, let it be seen that you are too happy with your Lord to seek for felicity anywhere else. Christ's approbation is your crown, His law is your delight, and His smile is your felicity.

Long for heaven, where your Lord and you shall never be separated, and where you shall see Him as He is. In vain shall death forbid your approach to Jesus, for in that flesh which worms shall destroy you shall see God. In vain shall the accuser of the brethren demand your condemnation, for in spite of all his charges he shall see the mercy of the Lord Jesus adjudging you to eternal life. And in vain shall the workers of iniquity try to prevent your separation from them, for it shall be effected by love directed by infinite wisdom, and armed by almighty power.

If there be any before me whose hearts are now complaining, 'I sought Jesus, but I found Him not,' I would say to them, let your inquiries be more humble, affectionate, and earnest, than they have been, and the promise of God will be verified: 'Ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye search for Me with

all your hearts.' The termination of the solemnity may be more happy to you than its commencement. And however long He may delay His meeting with you, 'it is good for a man both to wait and quietly to hope for the salvation of the Lord.'

ADDRESS XXXVII.

And when the centurion, who stood over against Him, saw that He so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God.

MARK xv. 39.

WHEN we read or hear of any remarkable event, our curiosity is excited to know what impression it produced on the spectators; whether it awakened astonishment or fear, or anger or joy; and how these feelings were manifested. Such a desire hath been strongly felt with regard to the crucifixion of our Lord, and Providence hath gratified it by recording, among other particulars, the memorable confession of the Roman Centurion.

It appears that this man was first impressed with the belief of our Lord's innocence, and that, in the course of the solemn scene, he was made to feel the strongest convictions of His Divine excellence and glory. The Jews had sought to stone Jesus, for saying that God was His Father. Peter, who had made this good confession, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,' had with oaths and curses averred, 'I know not the man.' On His declaring Himself the Christ, the Son of the Blessed, before the council, the high priest rent his clothes, saying, 'He hath spoken blasphemy;' but behold from the lips of a soldier and a heathen, an ample testimony is brought to this momentous truth. It may confirm your faith, and direct and animate your profession, to consider the characters which mark this testimony. It is the second instance of a person of this rank and office doing homage to Christ. The former honoured Him, by expressing his confidence in His power to heal his sick servant without coming near him; and Jesus declared, in the language of admiration, 'I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel;' but this man glorified Him when He was humbled to the death of the cross; and though no approbation was expressed in the hearing of mortals, its insertion in the Word of God is a proof of the estimation with which this testimony was regarded in heaven. Let us learn from it the feelings with which we ought to contemplate

a crucified Saviour, and the homage that is due to Him at the cross.

The centurion's testimony, though short, is full and comprehensive. From his residence in Judea, it is obvious that he must have heard of the Messiah, and of His divine character. He was aware that the sufferer had claimed the title of the Son of God, and he here confesses its justice. He acknowledges Him as the Son of God, who had suffered and died in our nature; and as such a being could not suffer for any fault of His own, or against His will, he felt that His crucifixion must have been endured to obtain some important ends. These ends were, we trust, unfolded to him, by that Spirit who will teach the meek His way, and guide the ingenuous mind into all truth.

This testimony is expressed with great energy. It is not like the language of mere pity and hope, in which spectators speak of the characters of the dying; but it is the opinion of one who beheld in our Lord, not only the purity of innocence, but the majesty of Divinity. There is nought of conjecture or hesitancy about it; it is the language of certain and entire persuasion.

Its abruptness is most worthy of notice. It is obviously the language of nature under strong excitement, and is not liable to the least suspicion of art or affectation. He does not preface it by any representation of its object or justice; but, persuaded that every eye, and every thought around him, were directed to the cross where his were fixed, he breaks out at once in this devout exclamation.

Consider its boldness. It was made in opposition to the populace who had derided Christ's claim, and to the court which had condemned Him for maintaining it. It might subject him to the disapprobation and contempt of his companions in command, who would be ready to imagine that he ought to have manifested more firmness of mind and greater sternness of manner on this occasion; and he was aware that it would be most offensive to the leading men among the Jews, who would make the most unfavourable representation of his conduct to his superiors, and thus might not only impede his promotion, but occasion the loss of his office, nay, of his life; yet he expresses, with all the courage of a holy zeal, the impressions of his heart.

This is not the testimony of an associate of our Lord's, whose language might be viewed with suspicion as that of a partisan, but of a stranger, all whose prejudices were directed against Christ and His pretensions, till they were swept away

by the overpowering evidence of His innocence and dignity, presented in this scene.

It is a circumstance well worthy of our notice, that in this testimony he was joined by the Roman soldiers under his command at the cross. These hardy veterans, inured to scenes of peril and blood, and accustomed to regard the Jews with scorn and hatred, and who had mocked and abused our Lord, when He was placed in their power, were now filled with awe, and declare His greatness whom they had seen expiring in anguish and shame.

This testimony strikingly accords with those paid to Jesus at two other most remarkable periods of His life,—His baptism and His transfiguration. The voice came not from the excellent glory, but it proceeded from the lips and heart of a man under the influence of the Eternal Spirit. Heavenly wisdom spoke by this man, and its words were in his tongue. And in paying this testimony he could have no motives but the purest and the best. He had no interest to serve by it; nor can it be said that he wished to gratify his vanity by an affectation of feeling for the sufferer; for this was quite unsuitable to what was deemed becoming in a soldier. It was prompted by a wish to do justice to injured innocence and to insulted majesty, and to lead His revilers and murderers to repentance for their conduct.

But what led the centurion to this memorable confession? He was led to it by the wonders which attended the death of Christ. It was a notion common among the heathen, that remarkable appearances often accompanied the death of those who were dear to the gods, and this opinion might excite his attention to the import of these prodigies; but, beholding them surpassing so far everything that he had read in the records of history, or in the fables of superstition, respecting the end of men of eminence, and guided by the Spirit of wisdom, he considered the darkened sun, the quaking earth, and the rending rocks, as the witness of heaven to the sufferer's innocence and dignity. The God of nature would not have signalized by such miracles the death of a criminal, an impostor, or an ordinary personage. The sun was eclipsed, because He who forms the light was passing into the land of darkness; the vail of the temple was rent in twain from top to bottom, to show that a spiritual guide had now appeared to abolish the carnal ordinances of a preparatory dispensation, and to call us to a purer worship, a brighter creed, and a nobler temple; the earth quakes, and the rocks are rent, to testify that the crucified Saviour was one whom all the inhabitants of the world should

fear; and the graves were opened, because the keys of death were now committed to its conqueror.

Fix your attention, Christians, on these wonders, and give glory to Him whom all the host of heaven worships; draw near to Him in spiritual homage, and beseech Him to melt your hearts in holy tenderness, and to form you to newness of life. No prejudices can be too gross for Him to dissipate, no hearts too obdurate for Him to mollify, no characters too depraved for Him to renovate, and no despair too horrible for Him to change into a lively hope.

But the centurion was led to this testimony also by the behaviour of the sufferer. If he went at the head of the armed band by whom our Lord was apprehended, he would witness the majesty of His look and voice, and the meekness and fortitude with which He resigned Himself to their hands. If he was in the hall during the trial, he would behold the mild dignity of His demeanour amidst false accusations and cruel abuse. His patience on the cross, so different from the sullen hardihood of the stubborn criminal and the affected contempt of philosophic pride, His forgiveness of His enemies, His gracious assurance of admission to heaven made to the penitent thief, the signal change wrought on that man and the earnestness with which he implored His mercy, the confidence with which He committed His soul into His Father's hands, and the loud cry with which this was expressed, so different from the feeble and broken accents of the dying, convinced him that He was the Holy One of God.

Christians, contemplate these graces till you are formed to the likeness of His death, till patience is perfected in you, till every malignant passion is extirpated from your hearts, till you learn to live and to die in faith. May the review of them at this solemn season be blessed for changing you into His image, and may you depart from that table more imbued with His Spirit, and more devoted to His will.

How admirably does this testimony accord with that borne to a suffering Redeemer by the prophets! Isaiah, looking to the Man of Sorrows, calls Him 'Immanuel, God with us;' Jeremiah styles Him whom you see numbered with transgressors, 'The Lord our righteousness;' He who is smitten by the sword of justice, you are assured by Zechariah, is the Man who is Jehovah's fellow; to the sacrifice that bleeds on the altar, the Baptist points as the Lamb of God; and Thomas, beholding His pierced hands and side, cries out, in what has been, I trust, the language of your hearts, 'My Lord and my God.'

Does your faith see nothing in the death of Christ to call forth from you this testimony? Behold the enemies He vanquishes. The powers of darkness crowded around the cross; they thought that victory now would more than repair the shame of every former repulse, would blast the favourite plans of heaven, and seal the ruin of man; and, under these impressions, they made a most furious assault on the Captain of our salvation; but their temptations were repelled, and these hosts were driven back in terror and despair. 'In the greatness of Thine excellency, Thou hast overthrown them that rose up against Thee,' and the captives whom Thou hast rescued shall declare Thy mighty deeds. Let this victory animate you to a bold resistance to every temptation, and to unshaken confidence in your Saviour's aid.

Behold a reason for the exclamation of the centurion, in the blessings which the dying Saviour purchases. Peace with God, tranquillity of conscience, deliverance from the wrath to come, redemption from the power of the grave, grace here and glory hereafter, were obtained by His sufferings. And surely there must be infinite merit in these sufferings, which could procure such blessings for such multitudes. These blessings are the portion of your choice, and these are the pledges of redeeming love; with such blessings you must not repine at any misfortune which leaves your all untouched, nor envy the superior wealth and honour of worldly men, which are but passing shadows.

Behold, another reason for this exclamation, in the virtues of the sufferer. Think of His love, and you will feel that in enduring for the sake of His enemies a death marked with all the anguish which men and devils, nay, incensed omnipotence could inflict, it was worthy of the heart of the Son of God. Never was there resignation like that which, during such a season of suffering, maintained entire acquiescence in the will of heaven. That mercy which, amidst the sorrows of death, blessed and saved others, proclaims Him the Lord of all grace; and that faith which retained its trust in the God who had forsaken Him, and resigned His spirit to Him who had afflicted it with such grief, shows Him to be its Author and Finisher. Jesus is the brightest pattern of the graces of religion, as well as the generous dispenser of its blessings. In His virtues there are no weaknesses to check our admiration, and no affectation to excite our disgust; but there is a purity and a splendour which show that the Spirit rested on Him without measure, and that He is the express image of the invisible God. In imitation of your Saviour, do good to them that injure you; minister amidst your own griefs to the comfort of your friends; keep from the

scene of misfortune, the bed of sickness, and the house of mourning, every word, and look, and feeling, which savours of impatience and unkindness; and be strong in faith, for in proportion to its vigour will be your pious activity in life, and your triumph in death.

We feel impelled to this exclamation, when we consider the moral wonders which the cross hath produced. In contemplating it as the instrument by which idolatry was overthrown and the world vanquished, the cavils of the scribes silenced and the sophistry of the schools confounded, persecution defeated in all its plans and knowledge and virtue spread over the nations, we must acknowledge Christ crucified as the wisdom of God and the power of God. The cross hath many enemies yet to subdue, and vast regions to Christianize; but we doubt not its energy, and may every communion show your increasing experience of its sanctifying power, and every year bring to us from distant regions new details of the wonders it hath wrought.

I call you, Christians, to honour the Son by the reverence of your hearts, the praises of your lips, and the obedience of your lives. His enemies are employing every art and straining every nerve to render His name odious, and you must feel this as a powerful motive to increase your efforts in declaring His glory. Resist every opinion which detracts from the splendour of this title, and from our Lord's peculiar claim to it. When truth is misrepresented by some, and opposed by others, bear your testimony to it as the wisdom which comes from above; and when piety is reviled and trampled on, confess it as the fruit of the Spirit, and as the perfection of beauty.

Let us be solicitous that the views and the spirit of this century may be diffused among our soldiers; and if the grace of God could make him a confessor of Jesus, let us not suppose that the profanity too common in armies is invincible. They want many of the advantages of instruction and worship which we enjoy; but the Spirit of God can employ a variety of incidents to strike them with seriousness, can persuade them to imitate the character, and to magnify the name of Jesus, and can 'establish them in every good word and work.' Let soldiers who are pious adorn their profession by sobriety and kindness, and unremitted attention to their duty; and let them show by their courage in the day of danger, their patience under hardships, and their unshaken fidelity amidst every temptation to desertion and tumult, that the religious soldier is most worthy of trust.

Let your conduct be always such that those who see you

will acknowledge that you are the children of God, and glorify your Father in you. And in your decline, when the rays of light, few and feeble, the keepers of the house trembling, the loosening of the silver cord, the chillness of your blood, and the languor of your spirits, shall indicate that your connection with the world is dissolving, let the exercise of your faith, hope, and love, be such as will evince that you are heirs of heaven. Then, while survivors shall say as you have departed, 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord,' Jesus will acknowledge you as His in the other world, and present you to His Father as the children whom He hath given Him, and whom He hath formed to righteousness.

ADDRESS XXXVIII.

And she brought forth her first-born Son, and wrapt Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.—LUKE ii. 7.

IN contemplating a magnificent edifice, in the strength and ornament of which art hath displayed its powers, we feel a peculiar pleasure in the survey, if we can look back to the period when we saw its foundations laid. In beholding the river issuing with full flood into the ocean, we contrast with wonder its majestic current, with the feeble spring in which it originates. But what is that astonishment and delight, compared to the feelings with which we look at Him in the manger at Bethlehem, whose fame is filling the world, and whose religion is blessing the nations! History describes the spot where men of renown drew their first breath. Glowing ambition hangs over the place where the conqueror rose. Literature consecrates the hamlet where genius first saw the light, and whose surrounding scenery first called forth the sketches of its pencil, or the melodies of its lyre. And can religion look to Bethlehem with indifference, or gratitude withdraw her gaze from the spot where the Son of man first came to seek and to save the lost!

Behold, Christians, in this scene, the exact accomplishment of ancient prophecy; which, like the star, guides our steps to the place where the infant Saviour is lying. 'Thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, although thou art little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He arise unto Me, who shall rule My people Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, even from everlasting.'

In contemplating this scene, let us mark with wonder that wisdom and power of the Highest, which united Divinity with human nature. How astonishing is the thought, that the babe who lies in that manger, is one with Him whose throne is fixed in heaven; that this weeping infant is one with Him, whose voice is the thunder, and whose arm is omnipotence; that He whom His mother is wrapping in swaddling clothes, is one with Him who is clothed with light; and that this Child, whose dormant powers shall open through a long series of culture, is one with Him whose understanding is infinite! 'Great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh.'

Providence strengthened Mary for those offices of care and love to her new-born child, which she had no female friend to perform. How affectingly does the Saviour allude to this! 'Thou art He that took Me out of the womb. Thou didst make Me hope when I was upon My mother's breasts. I was cast upon Thee from the womb. Thou art My God from My mother's belly.' In the unwearied efforts of maternal tenderness for His comfort, He felt His Father's kindness. How delightful to Mary were such ministrations, to one in whom she saw not only a son, but a Saviour! The mother's bosom is the infant's home, and its sweetest music is a mother's voice.

Let your minds fix on the humiliating circumstances which marked the birth of our Lord. No heavenly messengers are dispatched to prepare a palace and a bed of state for His reception. So selfish and cruel were the occupiers of the inn, that not one of them would resign his place to Mary, though she was now in a situation that required every kind and delicate attention. She retires to the stable, and there gives birth to Him who came in the name of the Lord to save us. That babe is sinless. It is the Holy One of God; yet in this state of destitution He appears on earth, as an affecting token of the indignities and sufferings which awaited Him hereafter. Sorrow came to Bethlehem, and marked Him for her child; and poverty foreboded, that He whom the world's scowl had driven to the manger, would not have where to lay His head.

Christians, ye are now commemorating His departure in sorrow. Behold the humiliation of His entrance into the world, and mark how, from the first to the last of His life on earth, He humbled Himself for you. Trace this affecting truth in the tears of Bethlehem, and in the sorrows of Calvary.

'When He bringeth His first-begotten into the world, He saith, Let all the angels of God worship Him.' And shall not your hearts now do Him homage? If, amidst all the in-

dignities of Calvary, ye triumph in the glories of His cross, shall not you, amid all the humiliations of Bethlehem, exult in Him, who, though He was of the seed of David according to the flesh, is over all, God blessed for ever. In that hour, angels began the noblest of their anthems; and shall we, whose nature He assumed in preference to theirs, be insensible to the glory of His character, or to the sovereignty of His love?

Jesus passed through the stages of childhood, that He might set us an example of those virtues which are the fairest ornaments of infancy. He was indeed a holy child. To the babe of Bethlehem, hoary age, as well as blooming childhood, may look as a pattern. Never did idle rage distort that countenance. Never did covetous desire stretch forth these hands, and never did the language of folly disgrace these lips. 'He increases in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man.' His little hands were stretched out to God, and His tears and His cries were consecrated to pity and love.

You think with indignation on the conduct of the inhabitants of Bethlehem; but alas! into how many hearts is He still refused admission. There is room for the most childish follies, and for the basest passions, but none for Him. Such, O Christian, was the case, even with thy heart, till He expelled His rivals, and took possession of it as His. Admire His grace, who said, 'This is My rest for ever, here will I dwell.'

Let us learn from this scene, no longer to complain that we do not obtain the comforts which we imagined we had a title to expect; that we are repelled from the door which we thought would be opened to us in all the kindness of hospitality; and that we are left to struggle, unsupported, amid straits and difficulties which we supposed others would gladly have shared with us. Think of Mary and her child, and learn sobriety in your hopes, and patience amid the disappointments of life. While the inn perhaps was resounding with the carousal of intemperance, and wanton insolence was raising the laugh at Joseph and his companion,—contentment and hope soothe the humble family in the stable, and angels would gladly have brought them the down of the palace for their pillow.

Fret not, ye mothers, that the children on whom ye so fondly dote, are so scantily provided with what is necessary for their comfort. There was not a babe in Palestine more forlorn, to outward appearance, than the infant Saviour; yet the wings of the Almighty were spread over that manger. Think of the Providence that decks the lily, and be content with such things as ye have.

But I hear from the communion table lamentation and bitter

weeping. It is nature mingling its tears with those of devotion. It is 'Rachel weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted, because they are not.' Had my child been spared to me, its smiles and its prattle would have cheered my poor abode, and with it in my bosom I would have forgotten the hardness of my bed; but scarce had I wrapped it in swaddling clothes, ere I was called to wrap it in its shroud; I have laid it in its coffin, and my heart cleaves to its dust. 'But thus saith the Lord, Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears; for there is hope in thine end, that thy children shall come again to their own border.' Canst thou behold God not sparing His own Son, but delivering Him up to torture and death for us all, and repine that He hath taken thy babe to Himself? The Saviour in glory hath not forgotten the days of His childhood; and, remembering the manger and the slaughter of Bethlehem, He looks with an eye of tender interest on the infant's cradle, and on the infant's grave. How affecting to the heart are the graves of the little children of the good! On them I see the buds of the rose of Sharon opening; and this is the inscription which Christ hath written on the stones which tell where they lie, to teach hope to parents, and piety to childhood: 'Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.'

ADDRESS XXXIX.

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.—LUKE ii. 10, 11.

WHEN Moses, of old, was laid in the ark of bulrushes, by the brink of the Nile, the daughter of Pharaoh sent her maid-servant to fetch it, and when she saw the child she had compassion on it, and made provision for its safety and support. Such were the circumstances of the infancy of him who was to be the deliverer of Israel from slavery, and to be celebrated in after ages as the wisest of legislators, and the mildest of men. On that helpless babe humanity hath often looked with strong interest, and blessed the compassion which, in spite of tyrannical jealousy and national prejudice, cherished him in her bosom. But the angel of the Lord has called you to contemplate a scene more interesting, and a babe more worthy of your attention, for He is the destined Saviour of the world. Pharaoh's daughter gave the Jewish child a name from what she had done for him.

She called him Moses, because she had drawn him out of the water ; but the name of this babe is Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins. This is a name dear to every heart, and celebrated in every song of the redeemed.

You have come to the manger to see the infant Saviour, and you are ready to envy the superior privilege of the shepherds ; but, though sense and faith were united in their exercise, your situation hath higher advantages than theirs. They saw the work of salvation in its commencement, but you have heard the triumphant shout, ‘ It is finished.’ They saw the bright and morning star rising, but you behold around you the brightness of meridian day. The darkness of heathenism is scattered, and the light of truth and grace is spreading over the moral world. They saw the branch springing from the Root of Jesse feeble and tender ; but you behold it a vast tree, whose expanded branches afford the most refreshing shadow and the most delicious fruit. They heard the first notes of the joyful sound ; but to you it has come with all the words of eternal life, and you have received it. Let your hearts rejoice in the Saviour thus announced and thus before you, and hear with pious raptures how He addresses you, ‘ I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour. Fear not, I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by My name, and thou art Mine.’ ‘ Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.’

‘ Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard Him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world ; and to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty both now and for ever.’ Sweet to the Saviour is this language when it is dictated by faith and love. The language which you can employ about the Saviour is very different from that which angels must adopt. They say, ‘ To you is born a Saviour ;’ but you can say, ‘ The Saviour is born to us.’ They proclaim the blessings of redemption, but you share them. ‘ Behold God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid, for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song, and He also is become my salvation.’ Had I their harps, Jesus would still be the theme of my praise ; did I possess their powers, they should all be occupied in the service of so good a Master ; and was their wisdom mine, it would still be my determination to know nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

Imitate angels in their benevolence, generosity, and holy zeal. Malice, envy, and activity in wickedness, are the characters of devils ; but good angels rejoice when the Saviour is honoured, and when man is happy. Never look with an evil eye at the

prosperity of another, but rejoice with them that do rejoice, and feel happy in carrying to them any pleasing intelligence. You may be sometimes called to go with sorrowful tidings to others; and in discharging the trying office with prudence and sympathy, endeavour to mingle with them the consoling messages of the Gospel. The incidents of the day, and the trifling talk of levity and folly will be as unsuitable to them as songs to a heavy heart, but the word of salvation in its grace and power, will be as cold waters to a thirsty soul. Let these good tidings be your own comfort in every time of need. Amidst the terrors of guilt think of the Almighty Saviour. In the midst of affliction repair to Him as the hope of Israel and the Saviour in the time of trouble. In your anxieties about the eternal welfare of your friends, remember the common salvation, and the extent and riches of Christ's power and grace. In the ruin of your earthly comforts look up to Him in whom is all your felicity, and when death comes, let your lips close with the Saviour's praise, and the last throb of your heart rise with the joy of His salvation.

Let the moral virtues be esteemed and practised by you as they ought. A holy life is with Him the most valued homage. Honour His religion and cause by the purity of your manners, the meekness of your spirits, the steadfastness of your faith, and the usefulness of your lives. The everlasting kingdom of your Lord and Saviour is before you, and this is the way by which you shall enter into it abundantly. In that kingdom salvation shall be your crown, and the great God your Saviour shall be your glory. Now is your salvation nearer than when you first believed. Advance in your journey to it with a more lively hope than ever; and may grace and peace be with you from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

ADDRESS XL.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised; to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.—LUKE iv. 18, 19.

THESE words were read by our Lord from the prophecies of Isaiah in the synagogue of Nazareth. To this passage He was directed by the Holy Spirit, as peculiarly descriptive of

His office and character. It was read by Him in a manner so full of majesty and grace, that the deepest impression was made on the assembly. The language He now employs must not be considered as the exaggerated description of an ardent imagination, and as requiring such limitations as are necessary in explaining the bold and lofty figures of the Eastern style, for all that is here predicted He hath in the fullest sense realized.

Our Lord was anointed to preach glad tidings to the poor, and consider how, in the course of His ministry, He fulfilled this end of His mission. Among the multitudes who crowded to hear Him publishing salvation, we seldom read of the scribes or the rulers mingling. They either regarded Him with scorn, or persecuted Him with implacable malignity; but the common people heard Him gladly, and to them He made known the way of salvation in the most interesting manner. Instead of lessons fraught with foolish traditions, or worship consisting of empty forms, and a morality in which the heart had no place, His discourses were fraught with the purest and most attractive wisdom, and the law was explained by Him in all its spirituality and in all its extent.

To the poor was the Gospel preached by His apostles, and it is chiefly among them that it is received in every age. Prosperity and grandeur cherish those proud and selfish dispositions which induce men to turn away with disgust from the humbling doctrines and spiritual nature of religion; while the poor find in them a sweet solace under all the evils of their condition, and an effectual preservative from that spirit of envy and discontent, which is the worst curse of poverty, and from every deed of fraud and injustice.

How different, in this view, does our Lord appear from the teachers of the heathen world. They went not out to 'the high ways and hedges, to the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind,' but they declaimed in groves, in halls, and in temples, on topics in which the greater part of mankind could feel no interest, and from which they could derive little advantage; but Jesus had compassion on the multitude, and wherever He saw them, addressed to them the words of eternal life, with a condescension which regarded their abject condition with pity, and a patience which all their prejudices could not exhaust.

You profess that you have received the Gospel, but it becomes you to examine yourselves if you have submitted to that method of salvation which it exhibits; if you are willing to yield your whole hearts to its influence, and if you possess that poverty of spirit on which Christ pronounces His first blessing.

Jesus also was anointed to heal the broken-hearted. Behold Him comforting the widow of Nain, and restoring her only son to her; displaying in the house of mourning at Bethany the most soothing pity, and cheering the drooping hearts of the penitent with the assurance of forgiveness. And this is the charge which He gives to His servants, 'Comfort the feeble-minded;' and His blood is the balm which is poured into their wounds. On the workings of the contrite heart the Saviour looks with compassion, the tears which it prompts He puts into His bottle, and for the sighs which it heaves His ear is open. Some have gloried in the hearts which they have broken, but Jesus triumphs in those which He hath healed. Ye mourners in Zion, listen to the words in which Jesus invites you to approach him: 'Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' When Hannah prayed before the Lord with sighs and groans which could not be uttered, Eli, in a rash and cruel manner, charged her with intoxication; and she answered him, 'I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit, I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord. Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial; for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto.' But never did Jesus send away the child of sorrow from His throne or His table with harsh upbraidings. 'He delivers our eyes from tears, our souls from death, and our feet from falling.'

Christ was anointed to preach deliverance to the captives, and to set at liberty them that are bruised. It has been remarked by expositors; that there is an allusion here to the state of some captives in the East, who were cast into prison, deprived of their sight, and loaded with heavy chains. And so deep was the dungeon in which guilty sinners were lying, so weighty the chains of their wicked habits and passions, and so powerful and stern their oppressor, that our release seemed hopeless. But when Jesus comes and says to the prisoners, 'Go forth,' their doors open, their chains fall off, their keeper is confounded, and they arise and follow their Saviour. He hath freed multitudes from the power of avarice and sensuality, malignant prejudice and black despair. And such is the influence of His religion, that wherever it comes in its power, it checks injustice and oppression in every form, and prompts every act of condescension and kindness. He hath made you free from the law of sin and death, and you are come to celebrate His grace and power, who took you from the fearful pit and the miry clay; and I call on you to reflect how poor He became that He might gladden you with these good tidings; that His soul

was exceeding sorrowful even unto death, that He might heal the broken-hearted; and that He was bound with cords, and nailed to the cross, that He might obtain for you the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

The Lord Jesus was anointed to preach recovering of sight to the blind. In the days of His personal ministry He opened the eyes of several blind persons, and by the power of His grace, He did, and still does open the eyes of the understanding. How great was the joy felt by those whose eyes Christ opened, when they beheld the sun walking in brightness, the fields covered with verdure, the little hills rejoicing on every side, and the varied results of human skill and industry; but it cannot be compared to their rapture to whom Jesus makes known grace in its riches, salvation in its blessings, holiness in its excellence, and heaven in its glory. Blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear. When you contrast the ignorance, the doubts, and the errors under which you once laboured, with that light and truth with which you have been favoured, you must feel the liveliest gratitude to Him who hath shined into your heart, and a pleasure which human wisdom can never inspire.

The eyes which the Saviour's power opened He permitted the hand of death to close, but the soul which He has enlightened shall pass at death into a state where its knowledge and its bliss shall be perfect.

Our Lord was also anointed to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. There is an obvious allusion here to the year of Jubilee. At the return of every fiftieth year, the bond-servant was restored to the rights and blessings of freedom, and the inheritances which any had been obliged to part with were then recovered. This was an emblem of that redemption which is proclaimed by the Gospel to the slaves of corruption, of the return of the prodigal to his Father's house, and of the call of the children of wrath to an inheritance which fadeth not away. Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound. There are some who despise this year of the Lord, and who boast that an age of reason is commencing, which will be the most auspicious the world has ever enjoyed. But the aim of such men is to banish every feeling and every rite adapted to purify or elevate our nature, to subvert every institution essential to the order and the peace of society, and to extinguish every hope that cheers the bed of sickness, or brightens the gloom of the grave. This result of infidelity is not mere speculation. It has been seen in projects and in deeds which will never be for-

gotten. They will be remembered to repress the presumption of daring impiety, to expose the falsehood of its pretexts, and to show that all that is valuable in social life must stand or fall with the institutions of the Gospel.

After this review of the Saviour's ministry, you feel, I trust, a stronger impression of His excellence and grace. The instructors and the deliverers of men cannot be compared to this Prophet and Saviour, either in the importance of the blessings which they bestowed, or the manner in which they are communicated. 'Unto you that believe He is precious.' And while the thoughtless and the profane say to Him, 'Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways,' ye will glory in Him, as eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame, the Friend of the oppressed, and the Father of the poor; the blessings of those ready to perish for ever shall come upon Him, and to Him every knee shall bow.

Happy are ye on whom the beneficent objects of the Saviour's ministry have been accomplished. Let such cherish the sentiment of the Psalmist, 'The law of Thy mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver.' He may suffer you to feel some pangs of grief and fear, to teach you a continued reliance on His sacrifice, and a holy sobriety and caution in your whole conduct. He hath freed you from chains whose iron entered into your souls, and hath disposed you to submit to the mild and salutary discipline of religion. Under the impulse and the guidance of the pious and the kind affections, you walk at liberty. He hath filled you with the light of the knowledge of His glory, and given you the certain hope of a blessed eternity. Wherever you cast your eyes, you behold, in His efforts for your happiness, motives of gratitude and grounds of rejoicing.

Let me call on you, in your various situations, to the imitation of those offices of the Saviour, in as far as it is competent for you. Beware of treating the poor with neglect or scorn in religious assemblies or in the intercourse of life, but exert yourselves to promote their instruction and comfort. The institutions which have been formed for promoting wisdom and piety among the poor, have, by the Bibles and treatises which they distributed, and by the instruction which they have imparted to the young, formed many, in the lower classes, to the best principles and habits, who would otherwise have perished for lack of knowledge. Let the broken-hearted, instead of being dragged to scenes of gaiety, or subjected to reproach and abuse, be treated with tenderness, and led to the Saviour, who comforts them that are cast down. In the spirit of our

Lord, labour 'to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke.' The exertions which have been made for the abolition of slavery, and the efforts of the humane to deliver unfortunate debtors from prison, and to restore them to their families, their labours, and their place in society, are noble testimonies of the power of the Gospel. Your charity is sometimes solicited by persons who have lost their sight by disease or by accident, and to it they have peculiar claims. And most deserving of the support of Christians are the institutions where the indigent blind obtain lodging and food, where the gloom of their condition is brightened by the employment to which they are led by a beneficent ingenuity, and by the cheering lessons of Christian instruction.

In a word, value the Gospel as you ought ; maintain a conversation that becomes it, and pray for the announcing of this year of the Lord to those who are sitting in darkness and in the region of the shadow of death. The sound of this trumpet drowns the clamours of guilt, soothes the troubled spirit, and raises the sinking heart to ecstasy. 'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace ; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation.'

ADDRESS XLI.

And, behold, there talked with Him two men, which were Moses and Elias : who appeared in glory, and spake of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem.—LUKE ix. 30, 31.

THE Apostle John was blessed with a view of the homage paid in heaven to the exalted Saviour, which was admirably adapted to revive the interest and to unfold the import of the scene you have been contemplating. It is paid in the high praises of God, not by a select few, but by all the blessed ; and not in the transport of a temporary excitement, but with a rapture and a vigour which shall not decay through eternity. 'I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and of the living creatures, and the elders, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.' There was not a spirit in glory that did not join in this tribute.

It is a tribute which traces the virtue of the cross in all the splendours of the throne, and in it every faculty of praise is put forth to the highest. Never was a tribute so deserved, and, compared with it, the acclamations of armies, and cities, and nations, are less than nothing and vanity. It is excelled only by the tribute paid Him by the voice which proclaimed from the excellent Glory, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye Him.'

You feel yourselves impelled to pay Him your tribute, and are, I trust, now saying, 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.' And wherever you turn your attention you will find ample reason for this triumph in His death. It was the subject of the councils of Jehovah from everlasting, and eternity to come will be filled with its glorious results. If you look to heaven, you behold what it hath purchased; and if you turn your eye to the fire that shall never be quenched, you see from what it hath saved you. In the Church you find the death of Christ the subject of its praise, the topic of its preaching, the theme of its conference, and the plea of all its prayers; and in your own hearts you feel that it is the source of your peace, and the basis of your hopes. By it the covenant of grace was sealed and the law magnified. From this death your life springs, and before its power the darkest fears of guilt pass away. With your thoughts thus occupied, and your feelings thus excited, may you now partake of the symbols of His broken body and shed blood; and may you feel such an interest in His death, and such influence from it, as that you will be able to say, 'I am crucified with Christ, He loved me, and He gave Himself for me.' All the glorified saints, were they present in this assembly, could not supply to us, O our Redeemer, the want of Thy presence; and we desire to be enlightened, sanctified, and blessed, by the brightness of Thy face, and by Thy voice of wisdom and love.

The scene of communicating, like the conference on the Mount, is soon over, but its influence on you will, we hope, be permanent. Moses and Elias left the Mount of Transfiguration for heaven, you quit the communion-table to mingle with the world, and to meet with difficulties and temptations, sorrows and death. But in the decease of your Lord you will find strength for difficulties, an answer to temptations, a balm for sorrow, a refuge in fears, and a hope for dissolution.

Let your gratitude to your Redeemer be more fervent and lively. When you are reminded by any circumstances of a great favour which you have received, and when some new

mark of a benefactor's kindness is bestowed, you feel your hearts glowing with gratitude. You have now been reminded of that death by which you are saved, and have been satisfied with the goodness of your Lord's house; and will you not adore and bless Him? It is possible to overrate a favour received from men, but who can value redemption as he ought? Improve this decease for strengthening pious affection, for increasing spiritual comfort, and for excitement to a holy practice. Never does Christ appear so amiable as in His dying love, nor sin so hateful as in His bruises and wounds. Never does holiness seem so excellent as in His obedience to death; and never is pain felt so easy, and affliction so light, as when we contemplate His agony. It will be a happy result of this service if it is evident to yourselves and others that you know, and love, and serve Jesus more.

Speak of this decease in your families, and let this be the great argument by which you endeavour to gain the hearts of your children to the Redeemer, and the source to which you direct the members of your household for patience and comfort under all domestic trials. Speak of it when you visit the afflicted, and point out the resignation which it teaches, and the peace which it yields. Exhibit to those who are tempted to despair, the riches of its merit, and the efficacy of its power; and let this be the chief means which you employ to prepare and to fortify the dying for their departure. The gloom of death can only be brightened by the beam that shines from Calvary. And do not complain that you must quit any scene of ease or enjoyment for this service. Abasement for Jesus is honour, labour for Him is pleasure, and loss for Him is gain.

Anticipate your own departure, and be thankful for every monitor which reminds you that you must soon go home. Dote not on objects which you are so soon to leave; fret not at difficulties which will soon be over; and complain not of burdens which you shall so soon lay down. Act as those who belong to another world, and let your conversation be in heaven. Rejoice in the friends, but above all, in the Saviour you have there. You shall soon behold His face in righteousness. Now you address Him in praise and prayer, and your accents are low and feeble, and often do you attempt to lift your hearts to Him in sighs and groans which cannot be uttered; but then you shall talk with Him in the song of Moses and the Lamb, and in the kindest and sweetest intercourse of friendship read His heart, and lay open to Him your own. When you quit this world, it will not be like Israel leaving Egypt for the wilderness, but like Christ departing for

Paradise ; and the sentence with which you are now dismissed from His table will be that with which He sends you away from earth, 'Go in peace.'

ADDRESS XLII.

I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished.—LUKE xii. 50.

How aptly, Christians, doth this language point out the extremity of those sufferings which you are now commemorating! Meditate on that accumulation of trouble which rendered Christ's soul exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; which made Him bow the head, and give up the ghost. Behold Him oppressed and afflicted, wounded and broken, groaning and dying. Well may Jesus say to His followers, 'Are ye able to drink of My cup, and to be baptized with the baptism wherewith I am to be baptized?' He went through the flood of sorrow alone; and of the people there were none with Him. Compared with the sufferings of Christ, the tortures of the rack and the stake are but light afflictions. O that your minds may be kept from slight thoughts of our Lord's sufferings! The pains of hell will one day teach those who make light of the sufferings of Christ, somewhat of the anguish that He endured. It is your mercy, Christians, to learn it, from the declarations of His word, from your deliverance from the wrath to come, from the memorials of His broken body and shed blood, from putting your finger into the print of the nails, and from thrusting your hand into His side. Many an anxious heart hath sighed, 'What shall I do in the swellings of Jordan?' But when our Redeemer passed through them, how vast and impetuous was the stream! The windows of heaven and the fountains of the great deep were opened, and sent forth their darkest waters to increase its violence. 'Save Me, O God,' the Mediator cried, 'for the waters are come into My soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing. I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow Me. Let not the water-flood overflow Me, neither let the deep swallow Me up.'

Tremendous, however, as this baptism was, Jesus was straitened till it was accomplished. His consent to obey and suffer in our stead, was not yielded in a rash or reluctant manner. He heard the proposal of His Father, 'Whom shall We send? and who will go for Us?' And, completely aware of all the consequences of His answer, He said, 'Here am I; send Me.'

Nor was this consent ever for one moment the subject of His regret. Of all the sighs that heaved our Saviour's breast, and of all the tears that flowed down His cheeks, there was not one to which we could ascribe a language like this, 'O that I had left guilty man to his fate!' His resolution remained firm amidst the solicitations of friendship and the plots of His enemies, the threats of hell and the gathering storms of His Father's wrath. Once, and but once, His human nature seemed to shrink; but love to His Father and to our souls made Him add, with the same breath with which He had requested the removal of the cup, 'Not My will, but Thine be done.' 'He was led as a lamb to the slaughter.' Mild acquiescence, unshaken fortitude, and love stronger than death, shone forth in the suffering Saviour, and shed beauty and splendour over the horrors of the scene. Never did the captive long so earnestly for the day of his release, nor the warrior for that of his triumph, as Jesus did for the period when He could say, 'the hour is come.' How admirable was the firmness expressed by our Lord in the presence of the Jews, in announcing His sufferings: 'Now is My soul troubled, and what shall I say? Shall I say, Father, save Me from this hour? But for this cause came I to this hour. Father, glorify Thy name.' Father glorify Thy name, even in My sweat of blood, and in My deadly sorrow; for its glory is dearer to Me than life to My body, honour to My character, or joy to My heart. Thy glory is supreme in all My plans and wishes.

Christians, have ye been baptized into Christ's death? Have you felt its attracting and sanctifying influence? Have you no hope but what it justifies, no plea but what it suggests, and no glory but what it inspires? Are your robes washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb? Do you feel a desire for His presence, which nothing but communion with Him will satisfy? and an ardour in holiness, which no difficulties nor temptations have been able to extinguish? Are you pressing into the kingdom of God? 'Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.'

This view of Jesus ought to raise your hearts to the warmest transports of gratitude and affection. Lord Jesus, precious art Thou to me in Thy dyed garments, and Thy breaking heart; for these garments were dyed in the blood of my enemies, and that heart was broken for me. Rejoice, O my soul, that heart lives, and feels, and triumphs for me. Lord Jesus, precious art Thou to my soul, in Thy burning eagerness to endure these sufferings, by which guilty sinners were to be re-

deemed. Can I turn to Thy longing eyes, and ardent heart, and doubt whether my salvation is dear to Thee? Can I look to them, and forbear to cry out with my whole soul for the living God? Can I look to them, and cease to follow hard after Thee? Can I look to them, and bear for a moment the thought of forsaking Thee, or living without Thee? If he who lays down his bodily life for another, is considered as performing the highest act of friendship—if it is an act of love so singular, that history has recorded the instances of it as wonders,—what shall we think of Him who gave not only His body to crucifixion, but His soul to the most dreadful anguish of the second death, for us? If the charity is admired which makes a few objects happy,—and beyond a few human beneficence cannot go, and in its ministration how little personal toil or suffering are requisite,—what shall we think of Him, whose love aimed at the happiness of millions, and led Him through the pangs of death, and through the sorrows of hell, to save us? The blessings of those that were ready to perish have come upon Him; and this is the sum of them all, that He sorrowed to death to redeem their lives from destruction. The mourner's heart has sung for joy; and this has been the theme of his song, that the heart of Jesus was broken for the healing of his. Shall our love to such a Saviour be feeble? or shall it ever wax cold? To other objects, age may chill my heart, and from them death shall withdraw it; but I will carry the kindness of youth into the decline of my days, and the fire of heaven shall burn amid the damps of death.

Let the ardour of Jesus, in His sufferings, teach us to suffer with alacrity. 'In the world ye shall have tribulation.' When Providence intimates to you, that reproaches and afflictions await you, say not, 'I pray thee have me excused.' Thou knowest my weakness; why should I be called to suffer, while others around me are exempted? Cannot the interests of my soul be promoted without these severities? Let us rather exclaim, at Thy command we plunge into the stream. Thou wilt hold us up: and Thou wilt not suffer the waters to overwhelm us, nor the stream to go over our souls. 'The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters.' Behold how David acted in such a situation: 'Deep called unto deep at the noise of thy water-spouts; all Thy waves and billows go over me; yet the Lord will command His loving-kindness to be with me in the day-time, and His song to be with me in the night.' The warrior goes with alacrity to the field where he expects to triumph; and shall not we go with cheerfulness, where we shall be more than conquerors? The lingering looks, and the fear-

ful shiverings, the loud murmurs, and the firm grasp of every object on the bank which will strengthen their resistance to the force which impels them into the stream, are a proof that the influence of the cross is either unknown, or very feeble.

Rejoice that He who thus drank of the brook in the way is now lifting up His head. Look from the Lamb of God bleeding on the altar, to the Lamb triumphing in the midst of the throne. Look from Jesus sinking in the flood of sorrow, to Jesus standing on the heights of Zion; from Jesus anticipating approaching suffering, to Jesus anticipating eternity of happiness; from Jesus longing for the time when He should die to save you, to Jesus longing for the time when you shall die to be with Him; and from Jesus strengthening you to suffer by His words and by His example, to Jesus guiding you to rivers of pleasure and wiping away all tears from your eyes. Live and die under the influence of such appeals to your gratitude, such motives to duty, and such incitements to hope. And may you be monuments of the power of His grace and of the stability of His friendship, 'who loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it, by the washing of water through the word, and present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.'

ADDRESS XLIII.

How much owest thou unto my Lord?—LUKE xvi. 5.

LET every communicant consider this question as proposed to himself. I speak not of the temporal bounties of the Redeemer, though it is He who gives us all things richly to enjoy, not because they are unworthy of notice, but because they have no glory in comparison with spiritual blessings in heavenly places. What answer are you returning to this question? I owe Him the blotting out of my immense debt to the law and justice of God. It was exacted of Him and He paid it. 'He restored that which He took not away.' It is to Him I owe the cheering voice which makes me lift up my heart with joy; 'I am pacified to Thee for all that Thou hast done.' He taught me to view God as my Friend. I saw the mercy of God shining in the face of Jesus, and heard His kindness speaking in His voice.

I owe to Him the life which animates my soul. I was lying in my blood, and He passed by and said to me, 'live.' My soul was dead in sin; and He gave me the life of God. My soul

was under the bondage of corruption ; but 'the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and death.'

To Him I owe the white raiment that covers me ; for the best robe was procured by His obedience, and I was arrayed in it by His grace. O glorious robe ! superior in beauty and splendour to that worn by Adam in paradise, nay even to those in which angels stand around the throne. 'Being justified by faith, I have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,' who lived and died to bring in everlasting righteousness.

To Him I owe the graces of the Spirit : Faith, with all its victories ; hope, with all the purity which it produces ; love, with all its labours ; peace, with all its comforts ; meekness, with all the security which it gives, and the good-will which it conciliates ; repentance, with its sacrifice ; and patience, with its perfect work. It is from the Spirit of Christ that these graces come ; to His throne they lead us ; and they live and act by Him.

To Him I owe all my gracious intercourse with God ; for 'He suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.' To Him thou owest every ray of His countenance, and every proof of His kindness, every assurance of His love, and all those happy moments of thy life in which thou didst almost think thyself caught up to paradise.

To Him thou owest thine escape from raging enemies. 'If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us, then they had swallowed us up quick.' By Him our courage was supported, and the assault repelled.

To Him thou owest the exceeding great and precious promises, those treasures of durable riches, and wells of living water. We cannot see the promises in their riches and their stability, their influence on consolation and on purity, unless we view them in their relation to Jesus.

To Him thou owest all the comforts that have soothed and cheered thee. Man of sorrows, 'Thou anointest my head with oil, and my cup runneth over.' 'Holy One of God, whom I made to serve with my sins, and wearied with mine iniquities,' Thou loadest me daily with Thy benefits, and every moment I feel the kindness of Thy hand.

To Him thou owest all thy answers to thy prayers. It is the smoke of His incense which ascends with the sigh of devotion ; it is His language, 'Father, I will,' which combines with thy voice of entreaty ; it is the memorials of His sufferings, joining with the pouring out of thy complaint, which

procure thee help from the sanctuary, and strength out of Zion. 'This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him from all his distresses.'

How, Christians, are your hearts affected with this review ! 'What am I, and what is my father's house, that Thou hast brought me hitherto ?' 'What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits towards me ?' O that I could render Him love with all my soul, strength, and mind, gratitude which will sing of His mercy for ever, imitation in all His steps, and obedience to all His laws. For you the cup of salvation is mingled, and for you the bread of heaven is prepared.

'What wilt thou that I should do unto thee ?' Is this your reply, Lord, that I may be freed from corruption, and that I may be holy as Thou art holy ? Oh that impatience may never fret, that impurity may never burn, and that enmity may never rage in this heart any more. Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, rather than that it should be defiled by corrupt communication ; and let my heart be cold in the grave, rather than that it should be set on fire of hell. To you, Jesus answers, 'Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace.' 'The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.'

'What wilt thou that I should do unto thee ?' Is this your reply, Lord, that I may be comforted in trouble ? You do well in not saying, Lord, I wish that I may be kept completely free from trouble. In your first entrance on the Christian life, you could not but mark the pillar which you passed by, for it was too conspicuous to be unnoticed. Your attention was so forcibly directed to it, that you could not advance without reading its inscription ; 'If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.' Jesus could have saved you from every pang ; but His wisdom and His love are conspicuous in your sorrows. It is by the sufferings of your lot that your virtues are tried. It is in the scene of conflict, that the noblest displays of Christian excellence are made. It is here that the consolations of religion are felt in all their power, and that the heart sighs most fervently for its everlasting rest. Fix your eyes on a suffering Redeemer. A view of Christ sleeping in the fishing-boat, will check the repinings of poverty, as well as the extravagance of riches. A view of Christ in the garden and on the cross, will hush to silence the clamours of pain and sorrow. The contemplation of Christ's meekness and gentleness, amid the reproaches of His enemies and the waywardness and prejudices of His disciples,

will raise us above the contempt of the proud, and teach us to bear, with mildness and patience, the difficulties with which we must struggle in the house of our friends. A look at Christ in the grave, will make us say, I will lie down, and sleep in peace, where the Lord lay.

‘What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?’ Is this your answer, Lord, that I may be safe in death? To you Christ saith, ‘Fear not to go down to the valley of the shadow of death, for I will go with you, and I will surely bring you up again.’ Death is to you a release. It is to you a day of discharge and redemption. When, therefore, the guarded hints of your physician intimate, that your disease is baffling his skill,—when the burst of lamentation from those to whom you are dear, convinces you that they understand your situation,—when, in your fluttering pulse, your shaking limbs, and your failing heart, you have the sentence of death in yourselves; ‘lift up your heads with joy, for the day of your redemption draweth nigh.’ It will be to you the best of days,—the day which finds you on earth, and places you in heaven.

‘What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?’ Is this your answer, Lord, that I may find mercy of Thee in the day of judgment? ‘When God rises up, what shall I say? When He visits, what shall I answer?’ How can I stand before the Son of man? The terrors of that scene will loosen the joints of my loins, and make my knees to smite one against another. But the love which will soften the majesty of the Judge’s countenance, shall tranquillize and strengthen you. ‘When Christ, who is your life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory,’ and with you He shall never part. Memory will not then overwhelm you with recollections of horror: for Christ has purified it from dead works. Conscience, then, shall not lift up its voice against you: nay, in its testimony it shall echo back your Lord’s approbation. Your good works, which you blush to look at, on account of their scanty number and their many imperfections, shall be accepted in the Beloved; and amidst all the horrors of a dissolving universe, it shall be seen that ‘the righteous hath an everlasting foundation.’ ‘I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable, for this is your reasonable service.’ You owe Him returns of devoted attachment, unwearied obedience, and superlative praise, the payment of which only commences here, and shall be carried on through eternity. O happy eternity, in which to me my Saviour shall be all!

ADDRESS XLIV.

Then He took unto Him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. For He shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: and they shall scourge Him, and put Him to death: and the third day He shall rise again. And they understood none of these things; and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.—LUKE xviii. 31-34.

THESE minute and solemn predictions of our Lord's sufferings, His disciples, when they heard them delivered, could neither relish nor understand. The idea of a temporal Messiah made their minds revolt from such scenes of suffering. Shall He be delivered to the Gentiles, who, we hope, 'shall subdue the Heathen under us, and the people under our feet?' Shall He be mocked and spitefully treated, whom we have acknowledged as the Christ, the Son of the living God, and to whom the prophets have said that every knee shall bow? Shall that face be spit on, the majesty of whose looks hath checked the insolence of the rude, and the benignity of whose smile is fitted to win every heart? Shall He be scourged, on whom, according to prophecy, 'the foe shall not exact, nor shall the son of wickedness afflict Him?' Shall He be put to death, whom we have seen the superior, the plague, and the conqueror of that enemy of man? By such reasonings, their faith was shaken, and their hearts were perplexed.

Christians, do your hearts turn away in aversion from the cross of Christ? or do they glow with affection to the Sufferer and with wonder at the glories of His death, which shed a splendour over the various indignities that attended it? Do you assent to the truth, 'Ought not Christ to have suffered these things?' Are you convinced that this was absolutely necessary for the expiation of your sins and for your everlasting salvation? Christ was delivered to the Gentiles, mocked and scourged, and put to death, because you deserved to be given up to the tormentors, to be clothed with shame, to be broken in pieces by God's rod of iron, and to be punished with everlasting destruction. Contemplate Christ thus suffering, and see what an evil and bitter thing sin is; the awful hazard of a state of nature; the terrors of the wrath of God; and the necessity and value of the atonement of Christ. I will look at these objects till my pride is humbled and till my cold and careless heart glows with holy feeling. I can have no true

peace, till I obtain 'redemption through the blood of Christ, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace?'

'Christ came to His own, and His own received Him not.' Nor did strangers deal with Him more kindly. The best friend of our race, the grand ornament of our nature, was like Ishmael in this respect, that every man's hand was against Him. 'Of a truth against Thy holy child Jesus, who came at Thy call, not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together.' I confess, with regret and shame for my folly, that once I was not merely indifferent but hostile to Him; now my heart and my flesh cry out for the living Saviour. Thine am I, O Lord Jesus, and on Thy side: and the vow of this day shall be continuance in Thy love, fidelity to Thy cause, and submission to Thy will.

But how were your views of a suffering Saviour changed? It was by the wisdom which came from above, in whose light I saw, from the perfections of the Divine character, that God could not but demand an atonement for sin, and that this atonement must be of infinite value. I saw that it would have been unsuitable to the dignity of such a messenger as Jesus, to appear on earth for objects of temporary moment. Eternity shall display the influence of His last hour. The Spirit led, and now leads me to the cross; and in His light I see its end and its glories.

Can you think on the Redeemer subjecting Himself to all these indignities and sufferings on your account, and not feel a stronger sense than ever of His love? You admire the generosity of the man who subjects himself to obloquy, to maintain your good name unimpeached; or who steps in betwixt you and the blow of anger or revenge. 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man should lay down his life for his friend.' But all that Christ endured was for enemies, enemies to God in their minds and by wicked works. Historians have celebrated the men who have died for their country. They have painted the cruelties to which they cheerfully submitted for their country's interest and glory, and called on generation after generation to weave fresh laurels round their statues. And must not they be devoid of sensibility to all that is noble and generous in character, whose soul never swells and whose eye never kindles at a scene, where a grace shone which still fills all heaven with astonishment, and which shall live in the records of every heart in glory?

Reflect, Christians, on the blessings which you derive from the sufferings of our Lord. He was delivered into the hands of His enemies, that you might ascend to His Father and His God. He was mocked and spitefully treated and spit upon, that your head might be exalted with honour. He was scourged, that by His stripes you might be healed; and He died, that you might live for ever; died on a cross, that you might reign in glory. The ideas you should form of His love are, that it exceeds comparison and that it passeth knowledge; and the feelings you should cherish with regard to His salvation, are those of ardent gratitude and rapturous admiration; and the returns you should make to Him are, a heart wholly devoted to Him, and an eternity spent in His service.

Beware of dishonouring and crucifying Christ afresh by unworthy conduct. Never betray Christ's cause and truths into the hands of enemies, through cowardice or simplicity. Let not a blasphemous thought lodge in your hearts. Defile not your garments with the pollutions of the world, and let no corrupt communication proceed from your mouths; for if you act an opposite part, you will put Him to an open shame. There are some 'who trample under foot the Son of God, who count the blood of the covenant with which he was sanctified an unholy thing, and do despite to the Spirit of grace.' Am I a monster, you say, that I should do such things? 'What, O Jesus, are those wounds in Thine hands? These with which I was wounded in the house of My friends.' Why is Thy back furrowed? It is because oppression and cruelty have ploughed on it. Why is Thy side pierced? It is because insolence and unbelief have thrust into it their spear. Why dost Thou groan? I hear Him answering, 'I am pressed under you as a cart is pressed under its sheaves. I am broken with their whorish heart, that departeth from Me.' Why does Thy face frown with indignation? It is because the rapine and sensuality of some, who call themselves Thy disciples, have made strangers abhor the religion of purity and grace, and curse its compassionate Author as the spoiler's Lord.

Submit with calmness to the afflictive incidents of life. There is ruin in a wicked man's success, for 'the prosperity of fools shall destroy them;' in his profits, for he gains the world, and loses his own soul; in his honours, for he is set on slippery places; and in his death, for 'the wicked is driven away in his wickedness.' But there is gain in a good man's persecutions: 'Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake, for great is your reward in heaven.' There is gain in his

afflictions, 'for our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and an eternal weight of glory.' There is gain by his losses: 'Verily I say unto you, there is no man that hath left houses, or lands, or parents, or wife, or children, for My sake, but shall receive in this life an hundred fold, and in the world to come life everlasting.' There is gain in his death: 'This is a faithful saying, If we be dead with Christ, we shall also live with Him; and if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him.'

ADDRESS XLV.

And when He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.

LUKE xix. 41, 42.

MANY are the bright examples of patriotism which are exhibited in the history of nations. The warrior who has secured the liberty, or extended the power of his country by his skill and valour; the legislator, who has established its rights, and promoted its prosperity, by his wise regulations; and the beneficent, who have founded institutions for the relief of the helpless and the wretched among its inhabitants, are remembered with lively gratitude from age to age. That they lived, not to themselves but to their country, is the tribute paid to their name when they die, and it is preserved with care as a sacred memorial of national gratitude, and as an animating motive to others to devote their talents and labours to the general good. Some have made great exertions for the public welfare amidst ungrateful and injurious treatment from their country, and on this account are extolled with loftier praise.

But how much superior was the display of patriotism made by our Lord when He wept over Jerusalem, and uttered, in the most pathetic language, the bitter regret of His compassionate heart. The services which He had rendered to the Jews, were far beyond all ever derived from mortals; His motives in these were of the purest and noblest description, and they were performed in circumstances which would have roused the meekest to anger, and hurried on the most forgiving to revenge; yet did He mourn over the lost sheep of the house of Israel, who had rejected all the offers of His grace.

The heart loves to meditate on those scenes in our Lord's life in which He appears in the tenderness of His mercy. Had

we merely seen Him scattering the treasures of wisdom, or exercising a control over the elements, we should have regarded Him with admiration; but we would have wished for some direct indications of the compassion of His heart. While power may astonish, and majesty may awe, it is goodness which encourages and generosity that wins. To a creature conscious of guilt and oppressed with sorrow, the mercy of Jesus is the most interesting of all His excellencies; and it is to the tenderness of His heart that we look in all the sad and trying incidents in our lot. Men may err as to the objects, the expression, and the degree of their compassion, but the pity of Jesus was guided by perfect wisdom; and while it sheds the sweetest grace over His own character, it most powerfully calls forth all those forms of charity in every age, which are so lovely and so useful amidst the evils of this mortal state.

The scene you are now contemplating presents the second instance which is recorded of our Lord's weeping, and it gives us a higher view of His character than the first. To weep for the sorrows of an enemy, is a superior degree of generosity to that which weeps over those of a friend. To mourn in sympathy is so common, that he who refuses to mingle his tears with sorrowing connections is thought of with surprise and aversion; but to weep for the calamity of a foe is so rare, that when we behold Jesus thus affected, we are constrained to say, 'Is this the manner of men, O Lord God!'

How interesting is the spot to which pious meditation is now leading you! On it every Christian traveller has paused, and indulged the tender reflections which it awakens. Writers of taste and genius have referred to this scene as a most beautiful example of moral greatness in character and genuine pathos in description; often have the ministers of religion pointed to it to give effect to their calls to repentance and mercy, and many have blessed the hour when their views were led to it, and have marked it as the time when they first felt the grace of Jesus. It is my earnest wish, that while your attention is fixed on it, you may be powerfully impressed with the generosity of our Lord's character, that you may experience the kindness of His love, that you may put on, as 'the elect of God, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, and long suffering,' and in your final salvation and perfect likeness to Himself, may Jesus for ever triumph.

The heart of Jesus was at this time melted by the prospect of the impending ruin of Jerusalem, and there are various circumstances which render this compassion in a peculiar degree wonderful. He was now advancing with unusual glory to Je-

rusalem, and was surrounded by the multitude, shouting for joy. In the scene of triumph, the man whom the people delight to honour, testifies by his looks the gratification which he feels, and it is evident that he considers it as the proudest day of his life ; but in this joyous procession Jesus weeps. In the brightest seasons of His life He still appears as the Man of Sorrows. He knew that these transports of the people would soon be succeeded by very opposite feelings ; and He would have preferred the pious homage of one devout heart to all the acclamations of the world and to all the glory of its kingdoms.

The Jews had been frequently and solemnly warned of the misery which was coming upon them, but they despised every admonition ; they killed the prophets, and stoned those who were sent to them. In such circumstances, others would have said that they were about to receive the due reward of their deeds, and that they deserved no pity, for they hardened their necks and refused to return ; but Jesus mourns over the fatal delusion which made them refuse His counsel ; ‘ Oh that My people had hearkened unto Me, and Israel had walked in My ways, I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned My hand against their adversaries !’ Their contempt of His warnings was afflicting to the Saviour, as defeating His generous efforts, and as an aggravation of their guilt and doom.

Our Lord was soon to suffer, and had before His eyes all the horrors of His agony and all the anguish of His crucifixion, and yet He sheds no tear for Himself. Many are so engrossed by their own woes, that they cannot bestow a thought upon the sorrows of others, and in the prospect of any severe calamity, they cannot turn away their eye from the quarter from which the blow is to come which is to lay their hopes and comforts in the dust ; but Jesus looks beyond His cross and His grave, to the utter desolation of the holy city ; nay, when He was led out to suffer, He said to the compassionate women who were bewailing His fate, ‘ Weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves.’

I may add, that the people over whom He mourns, were in a few hours to reject Him with one accord, to demand His crucifixion, and to put Him to a cruel and ignominious death ; yet, instead of wishing that God would avenge Him on His murderers, He weeps over their delusion and prays that they might be forgiven.

There are some places of Scripture in which we meet with displays of generous feeling which bear some resemblance to this. When Abraham looked to Sodom, and heard Jehovah’s purpose to destroy it, he poured out his soul in importunate interces-

sion for its preservation, and six times did he present the only plea which he could suggest for mercy. How wonderful is the condescension of Jehovah, and how amiable is the earnestness of the patriarch in that scene ! But he had no indignity nor persecution before him in that place by which his generous ardour was tried, and over which it triumphed. When David left Jerusalem, he went up by the ascent of Mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, with his feet covered and his head bare. Among these tears there might be some of pity for the miseries which civil war was preparing for his capital and country ; but they were chiefly tears of regret for the comforts which he had been forced to leave, and of anguish that his darling son had acted as a rebel and a traitor. But the tears of our Lord were those of pure benevolence and commiseration.

Christians, I trust that the view you have taken of the amazing compassion of the Lord Jesus, has increased your admiration of His mercy, and strengthened your trust in the riches of His grace. And when you advance to His cross, and see that He who wept for His enemies, laid down His life for them, you will feel that His love is incomparable. It shall be told, O merciful Redeemer, to the honour of Thy grace, from age to age, and as the most powerful motive to persuade to the forgiveness of injuries, that Thy tears were shed for those who were to insult Thy sufferings, and that Thy blood was poured forth for the salvation of those who in heart and conduct were enemies to God.

I call on you, Christians, to be grateful to the Saviour, for His mercy to you. His grace was exceedingly abundant to you, in wisdom and faith. Had you died in your state of blindness and delusion, you must have been lost without remedy ; but He brought you out of darkness into His marvellous light. He showed you the path of life, justified you by His grace, and made you heirs of glory. Study with more diligence than ever the things which belong to your eternal peace. If nought in the world can damp the ardour of scientific inquiry, shall your desire for heavenly wisdom wax cold ? The more extensive this knowledge is, the more holy and happy will it render you. While your faculties are vigorous, and your opportunities ample, follow after wisdom, and let there not be reason, amidst the confinement and the decays of age, for sad reflection on your indolence and folly. Jesus will mark with delight your spiritual attainments. He hath pleasure in the prosperity of His servants ; views with benevolent satisfaction the happiness you feel in communion with Him at His table ; and it is the day of

the gladness of His heart, in which He fills His disciples with the graces of His Spirit and with the joys of His salvation. He surveys with delight every step you take in the way to heaven, and His joy will be full when He presents you faultless before the presence of His glory, and when no remaining infirmity, and no decline in piety, shall ever mar His complacency in you. 'He will rest in His love, He will rejoice over you with singing.'

How astonishing is it, that the Lord Jesus in His glory still looks on perishing sinners with compassion! His glory now is very different from that short-lived triumph which marked His entrance into Jerusalem, which was so soon succeeded by the hour of darkness, and which so quickly led Him to the scene of blood. He is at the right hand of the Majesty on high, yet even there, amidst all the gladness which arises from the countenance of His Father, and from the happiness of His redeemed, His heart melts in pity for the victims of Satan; and by the methods which He employs for their salvation, He shows that He hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked. When He surveys the fulness of joy prepared for His people, and to which His grace hath brought so many of them, and when He thinks on those who scorn all the offers of this happiness, and by obstinacy in sin are fitting themselves for destruction, He may be viewed as saying, 'Oh that there were such an heart in them that they would fear Me, and keep all My commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever.'

In the Spirit of your Lord, take a lively interest in the welfare of your country. Some, under the influence of a spurious philosophy, reprobate all such attachments as inconsistent with general benevolence. But though the name of patriotism hath often been abused, to encourage envy and dislike, injustice and cruelty to other nations; and though we are bound to love all whom God has made of the same blood with ourselves, a peculiar attachment is due to the land of our fathers' sepulchres, to a people with whom we are connected by so many interesting associations, and to scenes so rich in the memorials of the care of Providence.

Others, under the influence of malignant discontent, sicken at their country's glory, rejoice in its calamities, and are eager to depreciate its institutions. And what hath their country done to them, to incite them to such conduct? Were it true that it had treated them with unkindness, it would still be their duty to pray for its welfare and to deprecate its ruin. Show your attachment to your country by the zealous support of law, of order, and of the public peace; by your readiness to make every

sacrifice which may be required to alleviate any general calamity, and by labouring to promote that Christian knowledge, principle, and virtue, which can alone insure the stability and the happiness of nations.

Regard not the calamities of your enemies with delight, but with a sincere, tender, and active compassion. If the heart that hated you is bleeding with sorrow, you will act like your Lord in binding it up, and you will find a pleasure in this effort of mercy which revenge never gave. When you see those who have injured you hurrying to destruction, instead of pleasing yourselves with the thought that Providence will thus avenge you, labour to arrest their progress, and show that you are solicitous for their amendment and not for their ruin.

Say not of the wicked, that they do not deserve your commiseration. Human creatures abusing such powers as God has bestowed on them to His dishonour and to their own misery, are objects which claim our strongest compassion. Ah, how few tears are shed over their present infatuation, and their approaching ruin! It is strange that it should have been deemed by any a mark of superior orthodoxy and of eminent sanctity, to address to them no call of mercy and to leave them to perish without an effort to save them. Instruct them in meekness and patience, beseech them in the bowels of Jesus Christ, and warn them with tears to flee from the wrath to come. You may thus gain them to wisdom, and if you succeed, your triumph will be blissful, and if you do not, you shall in nowise lose your reward. Such opportunities of pious utility will soon be at an end. Their next trespass may provoke God to seal their doom, and though He should still wait to be gracious, the time is short; life is but a day; sweet is its morn and bright its noon, but the shadows of the evening will soon be stretched out, and the night comes in which no man can work. What anguish will you feel when you hear of the death of a transgressor, if he has departed without warning from you! It is an act of benevolence to them and of fidelity to your Master, to exhort them to apply their hearts to wisdom, and to beseech them not to receive the grace of God in vain; and this will animate and cheer your own efforts in the study and the practice of that true religion which is the light of life and the whole of man.

You will depart, I trust, from this scene, with feelings of compassion for the Jews, who are groaning under the misery, in the anticipation of which our Lord wept, and disposed to support the plans of those who in wisdom and mercy are labouring to turn away unbelief from Israel. Of all the pious charities of the age, this will not be the least acceptable to the Savi-

our. How great will be His delight when He shall see their eyes opening to the knowledge of the Gospel, and their hearts glowing with Christian love! and if His Spirit animates you, that joy shall be yours.

ADDRESS XLVI.

Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations: And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me; that ye may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom.—LUKE xxii. 28-30.

SUCH was the language of affectionate approbation which Christ addressed to His disciples, and such was the cheering prospect which He set before them. The heart feels peculiar complacency in a tried friend, in one who has clung to our side amidst misfortunes, reproach, and danger; and thus had our Lord's disciples acted, and the applause of their Master at this moment would more than compensate all the anxieties and toils through which they had followed Him.

Is this encomium applicable to you? Have you gone out to Christ without the camp, bearing His reproach? Hath your adherence to His cause remained unshaken, amidst the afflictions of the Gospel? Would you rather continue with Christ in His temptations, than with the sluggard on his couch, the worldling in his pleasures, or the warrior in his triumphs? Are your ears closed against all solicitations to quit Him? Is this your firm determination, Though all men should forsake Thee, yet will not I? Do you watch with care against the influence of an evil heart of unbelief, which would lead you to depart from Him? Do you tremble, not merely at the idea of falling away into the open defection of the audacious apostate, but at the thought of sinking into coldness in secret devotion, and carelessness in meditation on Jesus? Give me, O Lord, I beseech Thee, a mind stayed on Thee.

To such pious souls Jesus saith, 'I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me.' A throne and a crown, a sceptre and a palace, treasures incorruptible, robes that wax not old, and an inheritance that fadeth not away, are yours. Christ's throne and crown, His sceptre and palace, His treasures, and robes, and heritage, shall be shared with you. Far superior to the jealousy, selfishness, and scorn, which admit others to no share of their advantages, Christ deems His happiness completed by His people's participation. 'The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them.' 'These

things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.' The smiles of My Father are sweeter to Me, because My people shall share them. The honours of My kingdom are more pleasing, because My people appear with Me in glory. More valuable to Me are My conquests, since they have taught My people to overcome. I delight in this throne, because on it there is a place for them, and in these robes, since over them their skirts are spread. I delight the more in this joy, because I can call them to enter into it.

'The liberal soul deviseth liberal things.' Never was there a soul so liberal as that which the Redeemer made an offering for the sins of many. Never were devices so liberal as His, who hath purposed in His heart that His people should be filled with all the fulness of God.

What, Christians, hath led you to the table of Jesus? Is it to show that you are on the Lord's side and that you are resolved to continue so? Is it to bring yourselves under new pledges of adherence to Him, that in the hour of temptation you may say, 'O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord.' 'I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep Thy righteous judgments.' Are these the feelings of your souls? What wonderful grace is it in my Lord, to reward a constancy which He Himself hath produced, and thus to throw a vail over my thoughtless wanderings! What astonishing grace is it in my Saviour, to promise a throne to one worthy of the lowest hell! O astonishing grace! He promises to share His kingdom with one who deserved the chains of darkness, the cup of trembling, and the everlasting fire of evil angels. The Master is come, and calleth for such humble souls. Before honour is humility. Approach His presence, saying, 'Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and made us kings and priests to God and His Father, to Him be glory and dominion for ever.'

'Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him.' Christians, ye shall eat and drink with Him at His table in His kingdom. Here you eat and drink with Him at His table, but it is in the house of your pilgrimage. You receive only a few crumbs of the bread of life, and a few drops of its water. You eat and drink with Him in haste, having your loins girded and your staff in your hands. You eat and drink with Him at His table, in the presence of your enemies, who are watching for an opportunity to assault you. Here, while you eat and drink with Him, you

often mingle your draught with weeping, and are fed with the bread of sorrows. But above you shall eat and drink with Him at His table in His Father's house; with the fatness of that house you shall be abundantly satisfied; and of the rivers of His pleasure you shall freely partake. You shall sit down to that feast in a state of perfect security and rest, for no foe shall be there to annoy, no interruption shall be there to grieve, no satiety shall be there to disgust, and no fear shall be there to disquiet.

Meditate, Christians, on the grounds on which you may expect this honour and felicity. Christ appoints it to you. It is destined for you in that covenant which is everlasting, ordered in all things and sure. Of the seal of that covenant you have now been sharing; and as sure as your Lord is in glory, so shall all His followers be in their order. Nay, 'You are raised up' already, and made to sit in heavenly places with Christ Jesus,' as your Head and Forerunner. Your expectations are founded, not on the words of a man, that may lie or repent. They are not the suggestions of fancy, or of presumptuous anticipation. Were this the case, where you expected plenty, you might find nothing; where you looked for a gracious welcome, you might be rejected; and where you thought a throne awaited you, the pit might swallow you up: but your hopes rest on a basis that cannot be shaken, and they shall never make you ashamed. O blessed covenant! my Lord's support in His temptations, and my security in mine! While I contemplate it, my complaints, my doubts, and my fears, pass away, my soul abounds in joy; and faith, triumphing in Christ, shouts forth these charming words, 'The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but Thy kindness shall not depart from me, neither shall the covenant of Thy peace be removed.'

Now, Christians, suffer ye the word of exhortation: 'Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that shall remain in you, ye shall continue in the Son and in the Father.' 'If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed.' Let the prospects of the Gospel raise you superior to the vain show of the world, and impress you with the baseness of vice. Act and feel as becomes those whom God hath called to glory and to virtue. Ascend not the chair of the scorner, neither sit at the table of the sensual, who rise up early in the morning to follow strong drink, and continue until night till wine inflame them. Let me not eat of their dainties, nor be influenced by their spirit. Better are the retreats of obscurity and the languors of solitude, the bread and water of affliction, and the utmost straits of indi-

gence, with the hopes of religion, than all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, without them.

We dismiss you with the words of the Apostle Jude; and admonitions more necessary and suitable, more important and more affectionate, it is impossible to conceive. O may they find in you a mind wise to understand them, a conscience that feels their authority, and a heart inclined to obey them! 'But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.'

ADDRESS XLVII.

Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.

LUKE xxiii. 34.

THESE words call on you, Christians, to contemplate the brightest example of generosity that ever was exhibited on earth. The pious mind loves to consider the graces and virtues which were exemplified by the dying Saviour, as well as the blessings which were procured by His sufferings. While you listen to this prayer, this will be your desire, Oh that this mind dwelt also in me!

Who is it that offers up this prayer? It is not the language of a man of a stern and obdurate soul, on whom good or bad treatment makes little impression; who, wrapt up in his own conscious dignity, considers it as unworthy of a great mind to be much moved by either. But the Son of Man had a heart peculiarly soft and tender. The ministrations of sincere attachment drew forth the expressions of His complacency. The kindness that received Him into its house, the attention which sat at His feet, and the hosannahs of applauding children, He marked with delight. On the other hand, His heart was alive to reproach and to injury, and deeply felt the ingratitude and the malice which they breathed.

This prayer beautifully corresponds with the title here given to our Lord 'Jesus.' They murder Him: He prays for them. What man who heard this prayer could imagine that it issued from a heart breathing slaughter? It is a prayer full of a Saviour's spirit, and rich in the blessings of salvation. It is not the prayer of an angel hovering by the cross, a being superior to human weakness and passions, but of one who was in all things made like unto His brethren, yet without sin; and who hath shown Himself as glorious in the generosity of His

prayers, and in the kindness of His spirit, as in the lessons of His wisdom, and in the miracles of His power.

This prayer He addresses to His Father. Jesus was at this moment enduring the wrath of God, as well as the cruelty of man; yet faith and love operate strongly within Him. His heart clings to Him who was then bruising Him, and putting Him to grief. Not all the sorrows of death which were compassing Him about, not all the pains of hell which were taking hold on Him, could shake His confidence in God. He looked to the Judge that punished Him as a Father; and to the cup of trembling as mingled by a Father's hand. The murderers of Jesus were sinning against His Father as well as against Himself; and in His view their crime was atrocious. Jesus felt at this moment the wrath which sin deserves, and He generously prays that His insulting enemies might never feel it.

Your Lord, Christians, hath taught you, by His example, to say, 'Our Father which art in heaven.' If it is soothing to the heart in the hour of sickness and sorrow, to ask the sympathizing ministrations of relations, it must be more soothing to implore the help of Him, whose love to us no human affection can equal, and whose relation to us is infinitely closer than that which is formed by the dearest ties of nature. If the language of tenderness from the lips of a sick friend melts the heart, will God despise the claims of sincere and holy affection? 'Wilt thou not, from this time forth, cry unto Me, My Father?'

The blessing which Jesus asks, is forgiveness. Pardon releases the offender from the punishment due to his crime. If the murder of a fellow-creature is considered as a most heinous offence,—if to kill a monarch brings on the traitor the severest tortures which man can inflict on man,—what vengeance must not they have deserved who slew the Prince of Life? The vengeance of eternal fire was their doom, and from this Jesus lifts up His voice to save them. He asks the pardon, not only of this sin, but of all their other offences; and as forgiveness is a blessing which is always associated with the things which accompany salvation, we consider Him as soliciting for them grace and peace. They treat Me as a criminal, but, O God, let them find acceptance in Thy sight. Let them see and feel their sin, but let them share in the happiness of those 'whose transgressions are forgiven, and to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.' They are exulting in my destruction; I wish to rejoice in their salvation. Our Lord was now offering up that sacrifice by which sin was expiated; and in praying for forgiveness to them, He asks a pledge of the honour that should

be conferred on Him, and the happiness which He would bestow, when God exalted Him with His right hand a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins to Israel. Jesus wished, that where men were gratifying their malice to the uttermost, and showing that the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel, God might, in the salvation of His enemies, pass by, and proclaim His name to be 'the Lord God, merciful and gracious, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, keeping mercy for thousands.'

Let us think of the persons for whom Jesus implores forgiveness. He asks it not only for those who had fixed Him on the cross, but for those whose sentence had devoted Him to this doom; and for those at whose instigation that judgment was pronounced. When men forgive their enemies, there is often some individual, whose injurious conduct it costs them a severe struggle to pass by; but in this prayer there are no exceptions. When men forgive their enemies, it is often when they have lost all power of avenging themselves; but Jesus could now have sent forth His lightnings and scattered His foes. Men are sometimes prompted to forgive by the appearances of repentance in the person who hath injured them; but the lips of Christ's enemies were at this moment full of cursing and bitterness. The language of forgiveness is seldom heard but from the deathbed. The dying man, who reflects on the multitude of his offences, feels that the sentiments and the purposes of revenge ill become him who is about to give an account of himself to God, that the sun of life should not go down on his wrath, and 'that he shall have judgment without mercy, who hath showed no mercy?' But Jesus 'always did the things that pleased the Father.' He had every reason to anticipate the highest approbation of His Father, and the most splendid rewards which He could confer. It was from no selfish consideration, but from the purest spirit of charity, that our Lord thus prayed.

The time when our Lord put up this prayer demands our notice. In the first moments after we have been injured, resentment is strong. The heart can think of nothing but the ill usage we have received; and to forgive those who have treated them so unworthily, would, if suggested by their best friends, appear to many an act of meanness and injustice to themselves and to their connections. The proposal would be deemed a proof of lukewarmness in their cause, and of partiality to their opponents. Time must be given for the tumult of passion to subside, ere the still small voice of reason and charity can be heard. But it was immediately after our Lord

was fixed to the cross, and when malice had done its utmost against Him, that He offered up this prayer. Nor was this a transient impulse of generosity in the Saviour's bosom. It is mingled with the last throb of His heart; and it was among His parting injunctions before He went to heaven, 'that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.' The conversion of many of His murderers shows the efficacy of this prayer. The three thousand Jews, who on the day of Pentecost gladly received the word, were charged by Peter with having crucified his Master. The victim of their fury they now honour as the Author of their salvation.

Our Lord urges, as a reason for the forgiveness of His enemies, that they knew not what they did. Deceived by the artful misrepresentations of their leaders, and disappointed in their favourite hope of a temporal Messiah, which our Lord's miracles had raised to the highest pitch, they now considered Him as an impostor, and were eager to destroy Him as one who had cruelly sported with the misery of an oppressed people. Christ pitied their delusion, and in the very place where His acts of piety and beneficence had been most grossly misrepresented, He offers, for the cruelty of His murderers, the only extenuation of which their conduct admitted.

When men meet with injurious treatment, their minds brood on every aggravating circumstance in the conduct of their adversaries. Our Lord might have said to these Jews, Many good works have I showed you from My Father; for which of these do you crucify Me? But instead of the language of rebuke and execration, He utters that only of apology and forgiveness.

What think ye, Christians, of this generous conduct? It is indeed full of grace, and demands the admiration and praise of our whole hearts. May the Holy Ghost give me a more glowing sense of it! Are you saying, Oh that Jesus would solicit my pardon! Alas! I cannot urge that I knew not what I did; but oh! ask it for the sake of Thine infinite merit; and may the voice that pleads for my forgiveness announce it. The generous spirit and the precious blood of my Redeemer, encourage my hope of pardon. I have heard the voice of mercy, and may I this moment hear it; 'Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee.'

I call you, Christians, to hope in your Saviour's mercy. Will He, who was thus candid and indulgent to His enemies, be stern and severe to those that love Him? 'He knows our

frame, and remembereth that we are dust.' He knows every circumstance which extenuates or which aggravates our offences. Think how He apologized for the drowsiness of His disciples, 'The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.' Before a Judge thus pitying and considerate, the feeblest of His saints may appear without dismay.

Let this memorable scene which you have been contemplating, elevate higher than ever your ideas of your Saviour's character. The most famous moralists of the heathen world inculcated the lawfulness of revenge, and their most celebrated men discovered, when they were treated with ingratitude and cruelty, that neither patriotism nor humanity were powerful enough to suppress their wrath. Often did the dying father leave it as a sacred duty to his child, to avenge his parent's wrongs; and denounce his curse against him, if he should ever pity and spare those who had dishonoured him. How shocking is it to see the bosoms of the dying agitated by resentment, and men sinking into the grave with imprecations in their mouths! How opposite to all this was the spirit of our Lord! We have heard of the martyrs forgiving their enemies, and praying for them; but it was at Calvary that they imbibed that spirit, and it was there they learned that lesson. Give their generosity every due eulogium; but let it not be exalted to the disparagement of the Saviour's. What were their wrongs to our Lord's? What were their claims to kindness to His? Tell us, ye martyrs of Jesus, what it was that softened your hearts? Whence came that generous tear which dropped at the thought of the peril of your bloody persecutors, and that dying prayer, 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge?' It was the Spirit of Jesus which wrought mightily in you.

History records numberless instances of men's destroying their enemies; and for this, fame hath held up their names to admiration; but, O Jesus, Thy forgiving and saving Thine, was a triumph infinitely nobler! Heaven shall give Thee its highest seat, gratitude its warmest blessings, and eternity its unwearied praise.

Let this prayer of the dying Saviour incline you to cherish the spirit of forgiveness. What fellowship have the malicious or the revengeful with such a Saviour, and where is their conformity to His death? Say not, if I had deserved the ill usage I have met with, I would be dumb with silence. 'But what glory is it, if when ye be buffeted for your faults ye shall take it patiently? but if, when you do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us,

leaving us an example that ye should follow His steps ; who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth ; who, when He was reviled, reviled not again, when He suffered, He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously.'

Say not, I must not give my enemy such a triumph over me. In forgiving him, 'you heap coals of fire upon his head.' You will turn his enmity into kindness. If it has not this effect, in the estimation of the wise and good, you gain the noblest of all triumphs over him, in overcoming evil with good.

The spirit and maxims of the world are opposed to the temper and the conduct which I am now recommending ; but 'ye are not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world.' Shall the ridicule of fools have more power over you than the prayer of a dying Saviour ?

Your own peace will be promoted by the spirit of forgiveness, for no passion tortures the heart like revenge. 'Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.' 'I say unto you, therefore, love your enemies ; bless them that curse you, and do good to them that despitefully use you and persecute you.' Beware of showing reluctance to forgive. There are some who remain deaf to the most urgent entreaties for reconciliation, and no tears can soften their ferocity. The evil spirit keeps his place in the heart ; and if he is at length driven out, it is after a most dreadful struggle. But think how promptly the generous Saviour pardoned His enemies. 'Go ye and do likewise.'

Delay not your forgiveness till it is solicited. Our Lord said to His disciples, 'If thy brother trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn to thee, saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him.' The disciples thought this so hard a saying, that they said, 'Lord, increase our faith,' that we may see, and feel in all their force, the motives and reasons of so difficult a duty ; but our Lord, when He was dying, asked forgiveness for those who saw not their need of it, and who sought it not for themselves. Pride may demand the submission of an enemy ere we forgive him ; but Christian charity will not suffer such a counsellor to direct or to impede its movement ; and we cannot too quickly suppress the resentful feelings of our hearts.

In fine, beware of acting against the light and the remonstrances of your own minds. Many a presumptuous sinner rushes on to sin, though he sees the angel of the Lord standing in the way with a drawn sword in his hand ; and many of this description catch the branch where the forbidden fruit hangs,

though they know that it will break with them, and that they will fall with it into the pit over which it grows. Stand in awe, and sin not, for happy is the man that feareth alway. Venture not to commit those actions, of the lawfulness and propriety of which you doubt. 'Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand, nor to the left; remove thy foot from evil.'

ADDRESS XLVIII.

And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on Him, saying, If Thou be Christ, save Thyself and us. But the other said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom.—LUKE xxiii. 39, 42.

SUCH was the manner in which the malefactors who were crucified with our Lord accosted Him during the awful scene. We think on the language of the first with horror: 'If Thou be the Christ, save Thyself and us.' Never did misery present so strong a claim to Thy interposition as now; and yet Thou leavest us to perish unpitied beside Thee. The adulation paid Thee as a Saviour by multitudes was the effect of delusion; for hadst Thou aught of that power and mercy which have been ascribed to Thee, Thou wouldst not permit Thyself and us to die in lingering agony. 'O save me for Thy mercies sake,' is a prayer which hath often ascended to the Redeemer, and been graciously answered; but here it was the language of bitter derision. It was the language of fierce and audacious impiety. It was the spirit of the damned that operated in him, even the spirit which makes them blaspheme the God of heaven because of their sores, and refuse to repent of their deeds.

Ye abhor this spirit; but this is not owing to the superior mildness and discernment of your nature. We ascribe it to His influence, who hath filled you with holy tenderness and godly fear.

But what was the language of the other malefactor to our Lord? 'Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom.' Insulted and tortured as Thou now art, I see a seat preparing for Thee on the right hand of the Majesty on high. I hear Thy Father's voice to Thee, 'Rule Thou in the midst of Thine enemies.' I see Thy foes humbled in the dust, every knee bowing in Thy name, and every tongue confessing Thy power. 'Look upon me, and prove merciful to me, as

Thou usest to do to them that love Thy blessed name.' It is not my tortured body that interests me, for a few hours will terminate its agonies; but my soul, that is sinking into misery which shall never end, supplicates Thy compassionate attention. One gracious thought of Thy heart, and one saving effort of Thine arm, is all I ask, and is what will make me completely happy.

Have ye, O Christians, ever felt such a wish, and uttered such a prayer? Is this the language of your hearts: I can bear to be forgotten by the world, even by my most familiar friends; but the dread of being forgotten by Jesus is intolerable to me. A place in His heart I value more than all riches, and the desire of my soul is to Him, and to the remembrance of His name. I have not violated the laws of men, as this malefactor did; but how often, O God, have I robbed Thee of the time and of the service which were Thy due? It becomes me, therefore, to approach Thee with sackcloth on my loins, and dust on my head, and to say, 'I pray Thee, let me live.'

Behold, in the kindness of Jesus to this penitent, a pledge of the love which He bears to the contrite. From the midst of sorrow, He casts a look of pity on this sufferer; plucks this brand from the burning; raises this child of wrath to happiness and glory; and gives to all ages a bright demonstration, that He is able to save to the uttermost. He is crucified through weakness, yet mighty to save; His hands are nailed, yet He breaks the jaws of the wicked one, and takes the spoil from his teeth; cruelty tortures Him, and yet He delighteth in mercy; He adorns His cross with the triumphs of grace; and, while passing out of the land of the living, assigns to His fellow-sufferer a place in paradise. Let this sight elevate the desponding to a lively hope, and let it open the closed lips to the highest praise.

In the spirit of this penitent, I encompass Thine altar; and, O God, in the multitude of Thy mercy hear me; and, in the truth of Thy salvation, deliver my soul.

The Saviour hath often distinguished the commemoration of His death by the triumphs of His mercy. The spectator who surveys this scene with indifference or scorn, hath no reason to expect the Redeemer's regard. But while Jesus blesses the devout communicant, He has sometimes shown the riches of His grace to those who, from the consciousness of guilt, durst not approach His table, but raised their earnest cry from His gate.

O ye who are cast down by the thought that the Almighty scorns your services! they indeed deserve His rejection; but

be of good cheer, 'your prayers and your alms are come up in memorial before God.'

Ye whose integrity hath been called in question, and who are mourning that the persons who could have established your innocence are now silent in the grave, be of good courage, 'your witness is in heaven, and your record is on high.'

To those who are looking back on the morning of life, and sighing at the recollection of the follies of their early days, Jesus now saith, 'I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, and the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after Me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown.'

Christians, when your meetings for religious intercourse are stigmatized as the scene where enthusiasm whines, or where slanders and tumult are hatched, comfort one another with these words: 'Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before Him, for them that feared the Lord, and thought upon His name.'

When your kindness is forgotten, even by those whom you have obliged, recollect that you have a higher motive to influence you than the gratitude of mortals. 'God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed to His name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.'

In the hour of distress, this is your privilege, that you may pray, 'Lord, remember me and all my afflictions.' 'Thou tellest all my wanderings, Thou puttest my tears into Thy bottle; are they not in Thy book?' When cold and distant looks, or when peevish and scornful language, show that your friends think not of you as once they did; and when you stand by the place where silence, darkness, and corruption testify that the dead know not anything, pray, 'According to Thy mercy remember Thou me, for Thy goodness sake, O Lord.' In Thy friendship is all my trust and all my joy.

In the hour of death, let this be your confidence and your prayer, 'I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh on me.' 'Thou art my help and my Saviour; make no tarrying, O my God.' He who remembered you in your low estate, will not forget you in the valley of the shadow of death, nor in the depths of the grave. 'He will hide you in the grave till His wrath be past; He will appoint you a set time, and remember you.' The grave is the land of forgetfulness to man, but your memorial shall be in heaven.

Be zealous, like this penitent, for the honour of your Lord. The name of our Saviour is profaned, His doctrines are opposed,

His miracles are ridiculed, and His laws and His ordinances are set at nought around you. Many, from indifference or timidity, are dumb with silence when their Saviour's cause demands their bold defence. Never let gratitude and duty call on you in vain, to raise your Master's honour from the dust. 'Stand fast in the faith, quit yourselves like men, be strong.' What is there in the insolence of impiety to intimidate you? What can you plead as an apology for your silence, which this man might not have urged? You are not, like him, inclosed by the assembly of the wicked, nor do the sorrows of death compass you about; your offences against the laws of society have not been such as to subject you to the upbraidings of the cruel, who would repel your testimony with reproaches. Your Lord is not now crucified in dishonour; but reigns on high, the possessor of all power in heaven and in earth. 'Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world.' 'The living, the living, he shall praise Thee.' In the face of scoffing impiety, and from the feelings of an admiring and grateful heart, say daily and hourly, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.'

Live in the exercise of repentance towards God, and of faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. Amiable is that life which they distinguish; and happy is that death which they crown. Repentance will lead to humility and patience, candour and circumspection. Faith will lead to heavenly-mindedness, and zeal, and joy, and praise, and charity. Such are the branches that spring from these trees. May we see them in your lives in all their summer's glory!

Take comfort from the words of our Lord, 'To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.' Oppose this assurance to the threats of Satan, to the terrors of the world, and to the sad forebodings of your own hearts. If it is so delightful to be with Jesus for a few moments at His table, if, amidst the joys of His presence, you forget that you are still in the vale of tears, what must the raptures be which shall be felt when you are with Him in paradise, the scene of perpetual verdure and of supreme felicity? The period of your translation is at hand, your Saviour longs for its arrival, and the inhabitants of heaven are witnesses with what fervour He prays for it.

Father, I will that they whom Thou hast given Me, whom I have met in Thy way, and with whom I have associated at My table, and whose hearts I have formed for Myself and for heaven, may be with Me where I am, to behold My glory. What can render such a prayer unavailing? 'Your life is hid with Christ in God. Ye are sealed to the day of redemption.'

ADDRESS XLIX.

And it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour; and the sun was darkened.—LUKE xxiii. 44, 45.

SACRED history presents us with several instances, in which God made the luminaries of heaven signalize, by their uncommon appearance and influence, His interpositions in behalf of His people. He made the sun to stand still on Gibeon, and the moon in the valley of Ajalon, till Joshua had avenged himself on His enemies. He made the shadow to go back ten degrees on the dial of Ahaz, to confirm the faith of Hezekiah in the prophet's assurances of his recovery. But what were these miracles, in all their glory, to the darkening of the sun at our Saviour's death? Now the Captain of salvation was spoiling principalities and powers, and making a show of them openly, triumphing over them on His cross. By this supernatural darkness, our faith is confirmed in the virtue of the Mediator's stripes to heal the maladies of our souls.

This darkness was an emblem of the dreadful infatuation of the Jewish people. Though Jesus was possessed of every character by which prophecy had marked out the Messiah, yet because He gratified not their carnal hopes, and conformed not to their illiberal prejudices, they despised and rejected Him. They were ashamed of Him who is the glory of His people Israel, and demanded His blood, who came not to destroy, but to save.

Christians, ye were once in darkness. You saw no beauty in the Saviour why He should be desired, and no majesty in Him why He should be obeyed. But what is your opinion of Him now? 'He is fairer than the children of men.' He is the only foundation of our hope. In excellence He is supreme, and in glory unrivalled.

This darkness leads our minds also to that conflict which was now carrying on betwixt the Son of Man and the rulers of the darkness of this world. 'Now is your hour and the power of darkness.' By suggestions the most gloomy, and by temptations the most horrible, they tried to shake the fortitude of our Lord, and to plunge Him in utter despair. It was in your cause that this battle was fought. He encountered these enemies in the height of their malice and strength, that He might make the conquest of them easy to you. He vanquished them, to make you more than conquerors. Those victories are celebrated with peculiar transport, in which the power is broken

that was the scourge of humanity, and in which the armies are scattered, which had spread desolation and havoc from kingdom to kingdom. With what delight do the benevolent set their feet on their withered laurels, and see their banners suspended in the temples of peace! But no enemies to human happiness can be compared to the gates of hell; and no songs of victory should be so dear to us as those in which we celebrate our Lord's destroying the works of the devil.

But this darkness more especially represented the gloom which was spread over our Lord's soul, from the absence and the wrath of His Father. 'It pleased the Lord to bruise Him, and to put Him to grief.' No voice comes from the excellent glory to encourage Him; nor was a sound heard from heaven, but the call to Justice to arise and execute the vengeance written. No dove descends and alights on His head, as the emblem of peace and consolation, for the Comforter is not there, and His heart is torn with anguish. The music of nature was hushed to silence while its Creator was in agony, till the returning sun announced that the conflict was over, and raised the voice of triumph from all its borders. Jesus endured all this to procure for you the delights of communion with God, and to save you from the blackness of darkness for ever. Remember, Christians, amidst the enjoyments of the communion table, that to obtain these for you, Jesus felt that dereliction, which He bewails in the most moving lamentation that ever rose from earth to heaven, 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?'

In your struggles with temptation, recollect the Saviour's last conflict, His courage, perseverance, and victory, and your hands shall be strong, and your hearts undaunted. 'Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy! though I fall, I shall arise; though I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me.' Oppose Satan's craft by the wisdom of the just, his fury by fortitude and zeal, his flattering suggestions by the penitence that knows and feels your imperfections, and his dark forebodings by faith and hope.

O ye who are now exclaiming, 'O that I were as in months past, when the candle of the Lord shone on my head, and when by its light I walked in darkness!' be of good comfort, for the horrors to which Jesus submitted entitle you to expect the fulfilment of the promise, 'Unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings.' 'Who is among you that feareth the Lord, and obeyeth the voice of His servant, who walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay himself on his

God.' Take heed lest, by the indiscreet exposure of your secret griefs, you do injury to religion ; and go not into the intercourse of society with that face of sadness, which will make men shrink from piety as incompatible with pleasure, and dread it as the ghost that walks amidst terror and gloom.

Christians, walk as children of light. Show yourselves superior to all solicitations to fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. By benignant candour, repress the malice of the censorious. Oppose a discreet liberality to the scrupulosity of the weak, and the firmness of moral principle to the enticements of sinners. While many follow, as if it were a light from heaven, the wandering fires of a heated fancy, and pronounce you strangers to religious sensibility because you sympathize not with their raptures, indulge not in bitter reflection on their folly. Point out, in the spirit of benevolence, the dangers they will fall into under the guidance of enthusiasm, and endeavour to counteract the unfavourable ideas which others may be led to form of piety from their extravagances, by showing out of a good conversation your works with meekness of wisdom.

When you gaze on the heavenly bodies, and say, in the language of devout admiration, 'Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun,' think on your Saviour, to whom, in His last hour, they lent not a single ray. His failing eyes saw no sun, and hours before He gave up the ghost, He bade adieu to the light of the living.

In that solemn day, when the light, and the sun, and the moon, and the stars, shall be darkened ; when the eye shall be closed to the gaze of friendship, and the ear to the voice of consolation ; when death is spreading its shadows around you, remember the gloom of the Saviour's departure. Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness. The day-spring from on high shall visit you on the borders of the grave, and show it to you as a place of rest and security.

The awful day shall arrive, when the sun shall become black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon red as blood. The sun that mourned with its suffering Creator, shall thus sympathize with nature ere it sinks into ruin, and then pass away from the firmament for ever. Yet amidst all these desolations, your fortitude and triumphant gladness shall remain unshaken. 'Your sun shall no more go down, neither shall your moon withdraw its shining, but the Lord shall be your everlasting light, and your God your glory.'

Now, my friends, recollect the injunction of our Lord, 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify our Father who is in heaven.' All preten-

sions to communion with God are false and detestable, which are made by those that walk in darkness. Let your conduct and temper be graced by increasing benignity, purity, and usefulness, that the world may acknowledge that 'the path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more to the perfect day.'

ADDRESS L.

And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, He said, Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit: and, having said thus, He gave up the ghost.

LUKE xxiii. 46.

SUCH were the last words which our Lord uttered, and such was the last act which He performed on the cross. You now behold a life marked by all that is excellent and useful, closed in a manner worthy of such a course. The sun setting in a sky adorned with clouds beautiful in form and colour, is an object which it is pleasing to contemplate; the warrior expiring in the field of blood, deeply interests the ardent mind of the brave; and the saints rejoicing in hope in their last hour, are beheld with wonder and love by the pious. But here we behold the Sun of Righteousness setting, whose glory covers the heavens, the Conqueror of the powers of darkness sinking into rest in the arms of victory, and the King of Saints showing, by His example, how good men should die.

Our Lord commended His spirit into His Father's hand, and gave up the ghost to complete the sacrifice which He was offering for sin. Death was the penalty threatened in the law, and which the Surety of man must endure. Jesus knew that His last moment was now come, and as He had offered to His Father all the previous parts of His sufferings, He now presented to Him their solemn close. On the altar of God the sacrifice had bled, and there it dies. Were a respite from death offered to the most part of men after they have endured severe agony for hours, it would be gladly accepted. The last shock is more frightful to nature than all the previous gloom, pain, and anxiety of a sick-bed; but that generous love which brought Christ to this hour sustained Him to its close, and no consideration could induce Him to come down from the cross, and leave His work unfinished.

Christ commended His spirit into His Father's hands, that He might make it happy with Himself during its separation from the body, and re-unite both parts of His nature in the resurrection. The idea of the separation of soul and body

is painful to nature, and the struggles arising from their appetites and corrupt tendencies, which weaken the attachment of the spirits of good men to their bodies, could not operate on the soul of our Lord. But this was His hope, 'Thou wilt not leave My soul in a state of separation from the body, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt show Me the path of life. In Thy presence there is fullness of joy, and at Thy right hand there are pleasures evermore.' He believed that His spirit would rest in the bosom of that Father, the power of whose anger He had now felt, and that His descent into Joseph's sepulchre would be the conquest of the grave. He trusted that His spirit would return to a body powerful, incorruptible, and immortal. His soul and body had hitherto been companions in pain and toil, but hereafter they would be associated in rest and joy. All the perfections of God warranted this hope. His justice was to receive an answer to its last demand in the separation of soul and body, and it would require their re-union, which the power of Jehovah could easily effect. And to a Son so dear and so worthy, what could the Father of mercies refuse! He had assured Him of this in a variety of promises; and Jesus knew that none of His words could pass away.

But our Lord commended His spirit into His Father's hands, as an example to His people. The soul is the chief care of the good in dying. They can leave the body to friends and neighbours to give it a decent burial; their worldly possessions they resign to those who shall succeed them; and with regard to relatives, however helpless, they hope that the kindness of the humane, and the care of Providence, will plead for the fatherless; but they feel many anxieties about the immortal spirit. They see guilt on it more than sufficient to crush it into the lowest hell; evil spirits they know are meeting and plotting to drag it down to destruction; and though good angels care for their souls, yet heaven is not theirs, and they can procure admission to none. But rejoice that Christ hath secured your reception to glory, and there is nought that is stern or repulsive in the voice or countenance of the Lord of that place; He will receive the spirit to the highest blessings of His love, and to employment which, of itself, would constitute a heaven. Your Lord hath authorized you to expect this welcome, and to express your hope of it in His own language. Many good men have used these words when they were dying, and are now blessing Him in heaven for that everlasting consolation, and that good hope with which they inspired them in their last hour. And to Thy honour, O blessed

Jesus, we will now say that all that is pleasing in life Thou affordest and heightenest, and that in Thee we will trust for comfort, and safety, and victory in death.

Is Jesus precious to you, Christians, in these views of His death? If we love the man whose influence secures us a safe passage through difficulties and dangers, we ought certainly to yield the best affections of our hearts to Him who hath made death a translation to a Father and to a home. What are you willing to give up to Him who for your sakes yielded up the ghost? Can you say, I will renounce everything but the grace He hath given me? The dearest connection and the most valued possession shall be surrendered at His call. What think ye of His atoning death? To this question I hope you can thus reply: So much do I value it, that I have fixed on it my dependence for eternity. I glory in it for the redemption it obtained, for the peace which it made, and for the graces which it displayed. It is the common centre of faith, love, and joy to Christians on earth, and of admiration and triumph to spirits in glory. And while you now commemorate that death, may the Eternal Father, to whom it was an offering and a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour, accept, strengthen, and maintain your delight and your confidence in the cross of His Son!

It is worthy of notice, that the language in which Christ commended His soul into His Father's hands was that of David, whose Son and whose Lord He was; and thus He hath recommended to us the petitions of good men, which are recorded in Scripture, to be used in devotion, and especially in the supplications of the dying. Were I to complain of any want in the narratives of the last hours of some good men, it would be of the language of Scripture. These words of eternal life must have a sweetness and power to the heart of the man that utters them, and of those that hear them, which none of the expressions of human wisdom or genius can possess. In using the language of Scripture, let your application of it be judicious and suitable, and let it be done with the reverence which is due to that word which God hath magnified above all His name.

It is also worthy of our attention, that our Lord did this with a loud voice. His expressions of relation to God had been derided by His enemies; but, to show that He had made no claim to which He was not fully entitled, He committed His soul to His Father with a voice which might reach the surrounding multitude, and strike insolence and cruelty dumb. The eternal Father heard Him with approbation and delight, and a voice from the excellent Glory reached the heart of the

expiring sufferer, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'

It is very remarkable that our Lord, in using these words of David, begins them in a manner which shows His affection to God, and employs the term 'Father,' which is not to be found in the verse of the Psalm to which He refers. His Father's wrath had overwhelmed Him with anguish, and in Him He had seen an avenging Judge, yet He calls Him by this most endearing name, and commits the spirit which He had tried so severely into His hands. We find it difficult, in the hour of God's anger against us, to address Him in the language of hope and love, and imagine that the frowns of His face and the blows of His rod are intended to repress it; but Christ's affection to His Father could not be shaken by all the horrors of Calvary. Satan laboured to suggest to Him many hard thoughts of God, but they were expelled instantly from that heart in which piety had the undivided throne, and which looked for its rest, rewards, and bliss, in God alone, and in Him for ever. In the spirit of your Lord, call Jehovah your Father, even when He speaks roughly to you, and demands from you your dearest comforts, and say, 'Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.'

No sooner had our Lord uttered these words, than He gave up the ghost. Man, in dying, obeys the law of his nature, and the spirit, thus required of him, he can no longer retain: but Christ had power to lay down His life. Death was in Him an act of sovereignty, and not the sinking of exhausted nature. The loudness of His last cry showed the strength of the vital principle. It was not necessary that life should be protracted any longer, for every prediction about His sufferings had been fulfilled, and it only remained for Him to lay it down for us, and this He did with generous promptitude at the appointed moment.

O ye, from whom life must be torn as it were by violence, and who testify your reluctance to die by your sobs, and cries, and vows, behold Jesus yielding it up while He had power to retain it, and you will feel ashamed to struggle. And let those who are tempted to take away their own lives, in the agony of disappointed passion or utter despair, look to Jesus enduring the cross, and their gloom will be scattered, and their fatal purposes repressed.

Keep your hearts with all diligence, for with no confidence can you commend to God, when you are dying, a spirit which anger has inflamed, unchastity has defiled, or avarice hath engrossed. Let meekness keep them in perfect peace, let tem-

perance guard them from every sensual desire, and charity influence them with every feeling of kindness. When anger rises, check it by thinking on the long-suffering of your Lord; when corruption is excited, repress it by crucifying the flesh; and when the world solicits, look from it to the grave and to heaven.

Be frequent in prayer. It was a favourite exercise of your Lord, and with it His life was closed. Many have begun to pray at the approach of death. It hath wrung prayers from the lips of the proudest blasphemer; but we must give ourselves to prayer through life, if we wish to call on God with comfort when we die. Nothing will strengthen for duty, dispose for felicity, or prepare for affliction, like prayer.

‘Commit the keeping of your souls to God in well-doing, as to a faithful Creator.’ An indolent, selfish devotion, which consults only its own indulgence, or which yields nothing but good words and fair speeches, is an abomination in His sight. While your lips utter the voice of prayer, and your hearts feel the emotions of affectionate confidence, be active in good works. If the wicked are so eager and determined in the service of Satan, it will be most disgraceful to you, if you become languid and careless in the work of the Lord.

Anticipate death with the feelings which become Christians. How easy is that bed of death which hath the gracious promise of Jesus for its pillow, and how happy is the man to whom the grave is the house of a Father! And if Jesus said, ‘Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit,’ amidst the severest agony of body and mind, you cannot pretend that you are in circumstances in which you cannot express it. Your last throb, your last look, and your last words, are due, not to relatives, however valuable. The last throb of your hearts should be produced by love to Christ, and by a desire to be with Him; your last look must be to His cross, and your last words should be, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.’

Finally, Meditate on those prayers which He addresses to His Father in your behalf, ‘Holy Father, keep through Thine own name, those whom Thou hast given Me.’ With such a protector, none can harm you. ‘I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever.’ With such a companion to soothe and cheer you, you need fear no evil. And this is the language in which He pleads for your admission to heaven, ‘Father, I will that they whom Thou hast given Me, may be with Me where I am.’ O blessed hope! Its influence shall make solitude pleasing, and death desirable. ‘And now I commend you to God, and to

the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among them that are sanctified.'

ADDRESS LI.

And He led them out as far as to Bethany; and He lifted up His hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.—LUKE xxiv. 50, 51.

THESE words lead your minds, Christians, to the ascension of our Lord, and to some interesting circumstances which preceded it. Ere Jesus parted with His disciples, He walked with them a considerable way, to show them the pleasure which He still felt in their company, and that, in a manner familiar and affectionate, He might address to them His parting counsels. Their hearts were agitated with anxious affection. The olive trees were blossoming around them; the songs of nature at its gayest season were filling the air above them; but they heard nought except their Master's voice, and they had no eye save for the face which they were soon to see no more.

'He led them out as far as to Bethany.' This was the place which He had chosen as the spot from which He was to be received up into glory. Here the tears of sympathy had flowed from His eyes, as He went to the grave of Lazarus; and here He commands the blessing, life that shall never end. At Bethany, the ointment poured on His head and His feet, prepared His body for the burying: now the anointing of the oil of gladness announces His elevation to the throne. It was in a garden near this place, that agonizing sorrow laid Him in the dust; and here He rises to the right hand of God, where there are pleasures evermore. He is now leading you to the scene of His sufferings, to show you what He endured for you; and when you behold him on Calvary bowing the head, and giving up the ghost, remember that from that hill His soul went to paradise. When you behold at Bethany the garden where He was in agony, and where His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground, remember that here, in soul and in body, He entered into His joy.

The time of separation is come, and He lifts up His hands. He raises His hands, not to give the signal for the approach of the angels who were to conduct Him to glory, but to render His last prayers on earth more solemn in the estimation of His disciples. This was the attitude of entreaty soliciting the

blessing, nay, of the majesty that bestows it. He blessed them. The words which He used on this occasion are not recorded, though we may believe that they were engraven on the hearts of the disciples. He asks from His Father the grace and the consolation which their situation required; and gave them the sweetest and fullest assurances of His mercy and care, and of their happiness and salvation. What termination could be better suited to His course of beneficence than this? At His birth, angels were heard blessing God, and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good will to men.' At His ascension, He is heard encouraging His disciples, and blessing them with peace. This was a circumstance worthy of His benevolence, that His last words were a benediction; and nothing was so likely to animate the courage and to console the hearts of the disciples, as such a parting. When our friends are gone, memory calls up all the instances of unkind treatment which they received from us to afflict the heart. She will remind us when the heart can ill bear it, of the fretfulness by which we grieved them, and the opposition by which we thwarted their wishes. That His disciples might not make themselves miserable, by reflecting on their unworthy conduct to Him, He parted with them in this affectionate manner, to show them that all was forgiven.

Christians, you are longing for your Saviour's blessing. Hast Thou but one blessing? Bless me, even me also, O my Saviour! And can you despair of receiving it? Look to that cross where 'He is made a curse for you, that He might redeem you from the curse of the law, that the blessing of Abraham might come upon you, and that you might receive the promise of the Spirit.'

While He blesses the disciples, He is parted from them. It is not said that He left them, but that He was parted from them, as if not only they, but He Himself, felt reluctant to the separation. Gladly would they have detained Him, but their interest required that He should go away. With the glow of affection in His heart, and the words of benediction on His lips, He quits the beloved circle. From the soothing offices of friendship, He rises to lead captivity captive; and from the regrets of separation, He goes to the welcome of angels, to the blessings of just men made perfect, and to the congratulations of His Father. It was love and pity that had detained Him hitherto; but now He must go. He hears the call of angels, 'Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be lifted up, ye everlasting doors, that the King of glory may come in. He hears the cry of the souls from the altar, Why tarry the wheels of His

chariot? He hears the voice of His Father, Thy rewards are prepared, sit Thou at My right hand.

He is carried up to heaven, not in a chariot of fire, but in a cloud: and, as He ascends, He drops not His mantle, but His blessing. He ascends to all the gladness of His Father's presence, and to all the splendours of His Father's throne. No power could arrest or impede His progress. Amidst the glories which were opening to His view, He still looks in love on the friends whom He had quitted; and He dismisses two of the angels who had come to attend Him, and orders them to go back to Bethany with a message of consolation and of hope. Their absence would make no diminution of the splendour of His triumph; yet even if it had done this, He was willing to relinquish it for the comfort of His followers. And what was their message? 'Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven; that same Jesus,'—tell them I am still the Saviour, and unchangeable in My love and pity for ever,—'that same Jesus, whom ye have seen ascending up into heaven, shall in like manner return, as ye have seen Him go up.'

But is Jesus no more in the world? As to His bodily presence, the heavens must retain Him; but as to His spiritual presence, He is with His people always, even to the end of the world. 'In all places where I record My name, I will come unto you, and I will bless you.' And can He be absent from a scene where His death is remembered? Will He withhold His blessing from melting penitence and eager devotion? 'O that Thou wouldst rend the heavens, and come down!' 'God be merciful to us, and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us.' Behold He comes, and it is to bless you. I see in His uplifted hands, and in the light of His countenance, the prelude to the blessing. And canst Thou leave heaven for me? My heart springs forth to meet Thee; and hast Thou a blessing for a creature so mean and so unworthy as I am? He hath blessings unnumbered; blessings precious as those of Bethany; blessings even for the chief of sinners that comes to God by Him.

Since the Saviour hath ascended to heaven, let your hearts follow Him. Can anything attract you to earth more strongly, than the glory of the Saviour draws you to heaven? He delights to meet your hearts there. Hath the communion of His table raised no desire after the marriage-supper of the Lamb? Hath seeing Him through a glass darkly, excited no wish in you to see Him as He is? Can you idolize a world which He vanquished, and turn away your eyes from a heaven to which He soared? Many are the burdens which press down the heart.

The cares, the enjoyments, and the sorrows of earth, have often this effect, even on those most devoted to the Redeemer. This grovelling tendency of the heart is the grief of the pious, and many a tear falls on the dust in which they lie. O ye who are now complaining, 'My soul cleaveth to the dust;' behold the Saviour's hand is stretched down to elevate you. Taking hold of this hand, you shall mount up as on eagles' wings, enter into the holiest of all, join with the blessed in the high praises of your God, and taste of the banquet at which they rejoice for ever.

But I hear a pious soul lamenting, 'The Saviour, in whose presence I was so happy, is gone; and had He left me as He parted with the disciples, I could have borne the separation; but the last view which I had of His face, I saw it covered with a frown; He raised His hands, but it was to thrust me from His presence; and His words to me were those of reproach.' I call thee to humble thyself under His hand, on account of that indulgence of folly and corruption in thy heart, which provoked and grieved Him. 'Who knows but He will turn and repent, and leave a blessing behind Him?' 'For the iniquity of his covetousness I smote him. I hid Me and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart.' O my God, save me from such guilt and folly. If I must live without Thy presence, let me walk humbly in the bitterness of my heart in Thy ways. 'I have seen his ways, and will heal him; I will restore comfort to him and to his mourners.'

Look forward to the separation which will soon take place between you and the friends whom you love; and when the period comes, leave them as our Lord parted with His disciples. Your parting counsels will never be forgotten. It is indeed a most solemn and affecting scene, when a departing son or daughter are heard imploring blessings on the grey hairs of their father and their mother, and calling on brothers and sisters to give their hearts to Him who will prize the kindness of their youth. It is a scene perhaps still more solemn and affecting, when the death-bed of a parent is surrounded by his children, and when from it are heard the consolations which shall soothe their sorrows, the admonitions which will guard their virtue, and the promises which will animate their hope. The trembling hands are lifted, and the closing lips are opened, to leave their last blessing. That voice will speak when you are in the grave; and that blessing will return into your own bosoms in the land of glory. For such an exercise, much fortitude, and self-command, and wisdom, are necessary: it is not the timid, whom the terrors of death are confounding,—nor the

feeble-minded, whom the anguish of surrounding friends is overpowering,—nor the selfish, who can think only of themselves, who will leave the world as our Lord did. Cherish the spirit of power, of love, and of a sound mind. Cherish it for the work of life, and for the duties of death.

Imitation of this exercise of our Lord by dying Christians, glorifies God, as it shows the confidence which His people place in His promises and mercy; and it is most soothing to parents themselves. When the burden is cast on the Lord, the heart feels relieved. The heart which hath so often throbbed with parental anxiety, must soon be cold and senseless. These eyes, which have so often been fondly fixed on their children, must soon be sealed up in darkness; but for them the Almighty's heart will feel, and for them His eye will watch. It is likely to be useful to children, not only during the solemn scene, but afterwards when it is recalled to remembrance. Shall I cherish the passions which a dying parent besought me to sacrifice? Shall I despise that religion which he recommended so earnestly to my regard? Can I expect to receive the blessings which a dying parent implored for me, if I live without God in the world? The faltering voice with which a dying parent prays, will be remembered amid the flatteries of pleasure; and the confidence in Jehovah's care of us, which he then expressed, will operate in us as a preservative from despair in the most calamitous situation. I know from his dying counsels and prayers, the objects which he valued most, and was most desirous that I should possess; and these objects I will pursue.

This exercise is adapted to promote the spirit of religion in the world. When the wicked man hears of it, neither feeling nor conscience will permit him to make it his jest. He cannot but think how different his parting will be. Can I pray to God to bless my children, when my example has taught them to curse Him? Can I ask Him to prosper them in things temporal, when I have taught them the habits of dissipation and excess? Can I entreat Him to adorn them with the graces of religion, and with the spirit of purity, when I have made these the objects of my ridicule and my invective? Can I pray that I may meet them in heaven, when I know that I am in the broad way that leads to destruction? Such reflections as these must damp his boldness in a vicious course of life, and show a strong tendency to lead to that change in principle and in conduct, without which no man shall see the Lord.

Rejoice that the ascension of Christ secures your admission to heaven in due time. The breaker is gone up before you, and every obstacle is removed from the way. The time of the depar-

ture of some of you may be at hand. In that hour the eye of nature will see nought opened before you but the grave; but the eye of faith will behold the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God. The eye of nature will see no messenger approaching to call you away except death; but the eye of faith will behold the Son of Man coming to receive you to Himself, that where He is, there you may be also. He will gild the cloud that is spread round your departing spirit; and instead of the sound of the trumpet with which He went up, you shall hear His own voice saying, 'Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.' And can you linger while thus called to depart? What is your place among men, to the throne that is prepared for you among the spirits of the just? If this walk of the disciples with our Lord was such a privilege, what must it be to walk with Him in white? That walk terminated in a separation, but this can end in none. If Christ's parting benediction was so delightful, what must His blessing of welcome be? If it be so sweet to believe His ascension, what must it be to share it, and to behold how high He soared, and how happy He is?

I call on you, Christians, to worship Him as the disciples did; and to return to your dwellings and to your duties with great joy. Let your shouts be joined to the acclamations that celebrate His triumphs, and your wishes to the longings of so many pious hearts, which are desiring to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

ADDRESS LII.

Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! Nathanael saith unto Him, Whence knowest Thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee. Nathanael answered and saith unto Him, Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel. Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. And He saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.—JOHN i. 47-51.

WHAT an estimable character was that of Nathanael! In a few words our Lord conveys to us an idea of excellence which we admire and love. The encomium proceeds not from a simplicity on which craft had imposed, or from the flattery that

delights to lavish applause. It comes from One to whom all things are open, and in whose lips guile was never found.

It is not the character of all religious worshippers. 'Israel compasseth Me about with lies, and the house of Judah with deceits.' We hope that you are worshipping God in spirit and in truth. While your lips praise Him, do your souls magnify the Lord? While your feet carry you to His table, do your spirits rise to His throne? While the gloom of penitence darkens the countenance, is the heart broken? While you profess that you are not of the world, has the spirit of it ceased to influence your hearts?

In your intercourse with the world, do you speak the truth, without the fair colourings of flattery, or the black perversions of malice? Does truth so regulate all your dealings, that the hearts of your neighbours can safely confide in you? Is your regard to integrity and truth such, that no prospect of ease or impunity can induce you to make a lie your refuge from difficulties or from dangers? Of you God says, 'Surely it is My people, children that will not lie; so He was their Saviour.' 'Who shall abide in Thy tabernacle? The man that speaketh truth from his heart.'

How perfect is the knowledge which Jesus has of our most secret actions! 'When thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee.' Our Lord probably refers to some act of secret devotion which Nathanael was performing, and which was peculiarly interesting to him, from the emotions he had felt in it, or from its influence. Is He now saying to your hearts, When you were first struck with My word, I saw you? In the lone retreat, where you gave full vent to the flood of penitence, and grasped the promise of mercy with a trembling hand, I saw you. At the communion table, when you joined yourselves to Me in a perpetual covenant, I saw you. In the house of mourning, when, amidst the tears of nature, your heart and your flesh cried out for the living God, I saw you. In the hour of urgent temptation, when iniquity tried all its arts to overpower your virtue in vain, I saw you. The meanest place where piety kneels, or gratitude sings, or penitence moans, Christ's eye marks with complacency. The secret chamber or the thicket, the hole of the rock or the bank of the streamlet, where religion pours out its heart to Him who seeth in secret, are precious in His sight.

Has this omniscience of Jesus raised in you the loftiest ideas of His character? 'Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the King of Israel.' Rabbi, Thou hast the words of eternal life; and in me Thou shalt find a humble and obedient disciple. Son of God, all that Jehovah hath is Thine, and angels

and men shall honour Thee as they honour the Father. King of Israel, I bow to Thy sceptre; rule over me, and dispose of me and of mine as Thou pleasest.

In approbation of the candour and pious acknowledgment of Nathanael, Jesus tells him that he would see in the miracles which He was to work such displays of power and grace, as would more fully evince His Deity and Messiahship. In the miracles of Moses, we behold the angel of destruction going forth, and terror, desolation, and death, mark his progress. In the miracles of Christ, we behold the messengers of mercy and peace riding prosperously. Where He treads, righteousness springs up; where He puts forth His rod, health and life return; and when He speaks, the hearts of the wretched sing for joy. Angels ascended with Him to the mount, where He prayed, and marked a human soul swelling with a devotion more glowing than theirs; and they came down with Him to the haunts of men, where He went about doing good. Angels ascended with Him to Tabor, where He shone in glory; and they went down with Him to Gethsemane, where He lay in blood. They ascended with Him to the cross, where He finished redemption; and they went down with Him to the tomb of Joseph, where He abolished death.

Is it your wish, Christians, to see His power and His glory? It is the Son of Man whom I desire to see, and without Him all the angels in heaven can yield me no rest to my heart. May I see Thee, O Jesus, as wonderful in counsel, excellent in working, and rich in mercy.

‘O blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not his sin, and in whose spirit there is no guile.’ Hold fast your integrity. The modest graces of candour, simplicity, and truth, however undervalued by many, are far more estimable than specious and glittering qualities which the world admires, such as complaisance of manners, elegance of address, and a disposition to say smooth things to all with whom we have intercourse. Let the heart be more interested than ever in the services you pay to God. Show more affection to His word when you read it, more love to His law when you obey it, and more dependence on Christ’s death in its commemoration. Let there be more of the heart in your kindness to men, in the tear of sympathy and the alms of charity, the warnings of fidelity and the tribute of praise. It is a common slander thrown on the religious, that they are not so averse from fraud and falsehood as from some other sins; but show the world by your conduct, that the religion which teaches you to abhor the excesses of intemperance, and

to reprove the language of blasphemy, inclines you to detest every art of falsehood; and that he who, from the fear of God, will not sit with vain persons, will not go in with dissemblers.

Give Christ the glory of His omniscience. Guard against secret sins. 'If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.' Beware of forming hasty judgments on the motives and characters of others, and invade not the prerogatives of Him whose work it is to search all hearts. The man you blame for indulgence to the vicious or severity to the unfortunate, may be actuated by very different motives than a fellow-feeling with the impure, or the malignant jealousy which glories in a rival's ruin.

Console yourselves with Christ's approbation, and deem it sufficient that He sees you, though no human eye should mark, and though no human voice should applaud your exertions. Be assiduous in the performance of those secret duties, and in the cultivation of those graces of the hidden man of the heart, which are known to none but Him. While others pray, and fast, and give alms to be seen of men, honour Him by the sighs and groans of penitence and devotion; and 'let not your right hand know what your left hand doeth.'

While you cultivate the spirit, you may rejoice in the consolations of the faithful, whose excellences and privileges are set before you in Scripture. Resting on Jacob's pillow, you may say, 'I have waited for Thy salvation, O God.' Taking David's harp, you may sing with him, 'The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.' Glowing with Paul's energy, you may say, 'I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me.' Leaning on Christ's bosom, or standing nigh the cross, like John, you may say, 'Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.' Having in you the Spirit of righteousness, with Nathanael you may say, 'Search me, O God, and try me, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.' 'Thou art all fair, my love, and there is no spot in Thee.'

Christians, you have seen great things to-day, but you have greater still to see. While you live, you will have cause for the prayer, 'I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory.' You shall see new charms in your Lord's character, new glory in His doctrines, new value in His promises, new influence in His precepts, and new brightness in His hopes. And what is Jesus seen through a glass darkly, to Jesus seen face to face? What is the communion table to the marriage-supper of the Lamb? What is the ministry of angels to the Man of Sorrows, to the songs of loftiest adoration with which they surround His throne?

Raise now the song, which, by expressing your confidence and subjection, honours His power and grace—‘The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King, He will save us;’ and soon shall you lift up your voices in that anthem, which shall proclaim the glory of Him who hath completed your happiness, and add to it a note higher and sweeter than is to be found in the brightest angel’s praise—‘Thou art worthy, for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood, and hast made us to our God kings and priests.’ Sublime as this song is, it rises not to His merits; and unceasing as it is, it exhausts not either the worshippers or the theme. Soon shall you see Jesus coming in the glory of all the holy angels. A spectacle how grand! It is the signal of ruin to the world, but of salvation to you. Amen, even so come, Lord Jesus.

ADDRESS LIII.

Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.—JOHN v. 14.

THUS did Jesus dismiss from His presence the man whom He had cured of a disease of thirty-eight years’ continuance. How fitly does the healing power put forth on this patient represent the spiritual cures which are wrought by the great Physician of the soul! May I thus address each of you, my friends, ‘Behold, thou art made whole!’ Have you felt that you were guilty, depraved, and perishing? Did the consciousness of your danger dictate the lamentation, ‘Woe is me, for I am undone?’ You tried every method of relief which your own fancy and hope suggested. You applied to those who heal the wounds of conscience slightly, crying, Peace, peace, where there is none; but all the means which you employed were found unavailing. Corruption raged in the soul, and terror and sorrow overwhelmed the heart. Remember the period, when, in an agony of mind, you exclaimed, ‘A wounded spirit who can bear!’ ‘Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am weak; O Lord, heal me, for my bones are vexed. My soul is also sore vexed. Return, O Lord, deliver my soul; O save me for Thy mercies sake.’ O free me from the pride and carnality which taint my prosperity; from the impatience which makes me miserable in sorrow; from the blasphemous thoughts which render the exercises of religion a terror to me; and from that horror of conscience which seems the commencement of hell within me.

In the day of your extremity, the Redeemer appeared, and bound up your wounds, pouring in wine and oil. He made your noisome sores give place to holy beauties, your gloomy terrors to lively hope, and your bitter groaning to grateful praise. He gave light to the bewildered mind, and rest to the distracted heart. He put His laws in your minds, formed in you new principles of action, taught you purity of thought and affection, and animated you to all holy obedience.

Whence, O Christians, came the balm which gave ease so immediate and so sweet to your wounds? It came from Calvary, for that balm is the blood of the cross. He was wounded that we might be relieved, and bruised that we might be bound up. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, that by His stripes we might be healed. The fountain of Christ's blood is the true pool of healing, and every disease must yield to its virtue; nor is it at one, but at all seasons, that its streams are sanative.

How sweet is bodily health! Ye can talk of its value, who are rising from the bed of languishing to mingle in the pursuits of life. Ye can tell its sweetness, who are saying, 'In the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave. My breath is corrupt, my days are extinct, the graves are ready for me.' What would I not give for the fulness of health to these wasted limbs, for the rest of health to these vexed bones, and for the freshness of health to this wan cheek!—But infinitely more precious is the health of the soul. It is the pledge of life eternal. It is a likeness to the Saviour's image. How admirable is its beauty! How delightful is its enjoyment! When it is perfect, and liable to no decline, as it will be in heaven, your joy will be full: but, alas! while here we live in an unfavourable climate, and, from our want of caution, our health is endangered. Ah! that moral beauty should ever decay, that spiritual strength should ever become feeble, and that divine charity should in us ever wax cold!

You have come to the communion table to testify your gratitude to the great Physician, and I trust you will find this ordinance invigorating to every gracious principle within you. The language which Paul addressed to his companions in his voyage to Rome, may now be applied to you: 'I pray you take some meat, for this is for your health, for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any one of you; and when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks in presence of them all, and when he had broken it, he began to eat. Then they were all of good cheer, and they all took some meat.' The apostle, amidst all his zeal for the salvation of souls, did not

disregard what was conducive to the temporal welfare of those with whom he associated, even of the very soldiers whose prisoner he was.

And shall not you, ye pilgrims to Zion, eat your bread with joy, the bread which Christ hath blessed and broken? Shall not you drink your wine with a merry heart, the wine which He has blessed and mingled? It must be for health, for it is the bread of life, and the cup of salvation.

‘ Bless the Lord, O my soul, who healeth all thy diseases.’
‘ O Lord, my God, I cried unto Thee, and Thou hast healed me. O Lord, Thou hast brought up my soul from the grave; Thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.’

Ye trembling souls, who are saying, ‘ If I may but touch the hem of His garment I shall be healed;’ stretch forth your hand, for there is healing in His robe. ‘ And the whole multitude sought to touch Him, for there went virtue out of Him, and healed them all.’ ‘ Why art thou cast down, O my soul? Why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance and my God.’

Ye backsliders, who have relapsed into your maladies, listen to His gracious call: ‘ Return, O backsliding children, unto Me, and I will heal your backslidings.’ It becomes you to approach Him with the deepest blushes of shame, and with the most pungent feelings of remorse. O Jesus, wilt Thou renew that which I have so wickedly defaced? and wilt Thou restore that which I have so madly thrown away? I could hope for this from no generosity but Thine.

Pray earnestly for the extension of His healing virtue to a diseased world. The leaves of the tree of life are for the healing of the nations. When the world was distracted by contentions and defiled with blood, infidel philosophy boasted that it could render it virtuous and happy; but, like the poison tree, it diffused the most unwholesome odour around it, and dropt a consuming venom on all who reclined under its shadow. Men can be blessed in none but Jesus.

Let the caution of our Lord be ever before your eyes, ‘ Go and sin no more.’ Your profession binds you to this; ‘ Let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity.’ I call you to this, by the regard which you feel for your own safety. Can you think of bringing back the films of prejudice to your eyes, the palsy of sloth to your limbs, the fever of lust to your hearts, and the lethargy of insensibility to your con-

sciences? He hath a rod with which He punishes the follies and the crimes of His children. How terrible is this rod in the hands of insulted Goodness! How painful are its strokes, to a heart quickened to spiritual feeling! Can you bear the thought of dishonouring your kind Friend and Benefactor, by your unworthy conduct? Hath He shown such tenderness and patience, such grace and skill in healing you, and can you be guilty of the abominable thing which His soul hates?

Think on the vows you have often made, and this day have repeated, that as you have done iniquity, you will do so no more. You wept in the presence of Christ over the little influence of your past vows upon you, and if these tears were not a mockery of the Saviour, you will feel a more determined abhorrence of every false and wicked way than ever.

Recollect the noble language of Nehemiah, 'Should such a man as I flee?' Shall a creature so loaded with benefits, and so bound by cords of love to obedience, desert my God and my duty? 'Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.'

Think what time you have devoted to sin already. How many of you have devoted to it the golden moments of youth, and the bright days of prosperity! These golden moments were dimmed, and these bright days darkened, by folly; and would you wish it to add to the burden of your days of carefulness, and to curse the infirmities of your age? Let every day be distinguished by new efforts to attain that perfection in goodness to which the Gospel calls you. Then, instead of a worse thing coming unto you, God will do better to you than at your beginning. It shows much grace to bring you to His table; but more to lead you to the banquet He has prepared above. It shows much grace to save you from hell; but more to receive you to glory. It shows much grace to begin the good work of holiness within you; but more to crown it with perfection. He shows much grace in granting you partial victories; but more in bruising Satan under your feet. Partial views of God are delightful; but what are they to seeing Him as He is? The consolations of God's house of prayer are sweet; but what are they to the joy of our Lord? Look for such blessed hopes, and count not any sacrifice painful to realize them. I take my leave of you, by expressing for you the wish of John for his friend Gaius: 'Beloved, I wish above all things, that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as

thy soul prospereth.' 'Save now, we beseech Thee, O Lord. O Lord, send now prosperity.'

ADDRESS LIV.

Lord, evermore give us this bread.—JOHN vi. 34.

WHATEVER was the object of the Jews in this request, and whatever was the spirit in which it was presented, it is a most suitable prayer for a devout communicant. It aptly expresses the pious wishes of his heart, and Jesus delights to answer it at His table. This is the place where He will satisfy the poor of Zion with bread. The prayers of the proud, the hypocritical, and the carnal, He will reject with abhorrence; but to the imploring voice of the humble and the penitent, He will bend His ear in mercy. In His house 'there is bread enough and to spare,' and in His heart compassions flow.

The bread of which our Lord speaks may represent His doctrines. We read of Wisdom's bread; and Hezekiah says of Divine truths, 'O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my soul.' The doctrines of Christ sanctify, and invigorate, and delight the faculties of the soul, and it is for want of knowledge that a people are destroyed. And by this bread are exhibited the blessings of Christ's salvation, that acceptance in which the soul is safe, that grace by which the saint acts, and that comfort in which the heart is at rest.

This is bread which comes from the land of Immanuel, and which is provided for man by Jehovah Himself; it is the true bread, of whose excellent qualities the manna, and all the other supports of existence, are but shadows, and the bread of life which blesses natural, supports spiritual, and nourishes to eternal life. It is bread whose nutritive qualities can never fail, which is as much within the reach of the poor as of the rich, which sweetens the meanest fare of the cottager, and whose place cannot be supplied by any of the luxuries of the palace; it is ever delicious to the palate, and on it the soul shall live for ever.

It is only in some countries that the bread-fruit tree will flourish, or that the 'corn of wheat' will grow, but this bread is destined for salvation to the ends of the earth. What is deemed delicious in one country as an article of food, is often loathed in another; but Christ is the common support and stay of His saints throughout the world: 'They all eat of the same spiritual meat, and they all partake of the same spiritual drink.'

There are seasons when bread is of no avail for the support of natural life, when the stomach can neither receive nor digest it; but this bread is suited to the necessities of the soul at all periods. In the agonies of death faith improves and applies His grace as much as in the duties of life. Other bread can only satisfy hunger. It will not avail a man that he is supplied with bread in abundance, if no water is allowed for his thirst; but in Christ Jesus every want of the soul may find a supply, every charge an answer, every pious wish its fulfilment, and every sorrow consolation.

It is by a laborious process that the fruits of the earth are turned into bread for our nourishment, and ere we could partake of salvation, Christ must become incarnate, and suffer, and die. He did sweat great drops of blood in His tremendous agony, that we might obtain strong consolation; and He was suspended on the accursed tree, as the worst of criminals, that we might receive 'the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of our salvation.' This is bread which has from age to age been the sustenance of good men, and which is still exhibited in as great abundance as ever. It comes from an inexhaustible store, and 'His mercy is from generation to generation upon them that fear Him.' The manna fell only while the Israelites were in the wilderness, and in no after extremity did they obtain again such a supply from heaven; but of the bread which the first Christians did eat with gladness and singleness of heart, we are invited to partake; and, till the end of all things, Jesus will spread His table, and say to the children of His love, 'Eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.'

The language of your profession is, 'Lord, evermore give us this bread;' but do you feel that it is absolutely necessary to your spiritual support and happiness? Bread is the staff of life; yet, necessary as it is, a substitute may be found for it sufficient for the support of existence; but without the doctrines of Christ there is no wisdom, and without His blessings there is no happiness. What are the speculations of vain deceit to a starving soul? 'It is as when a hungry man dreameth, and behold he eateth; and he awaketh, and his soul hath appetite.' And how poor is the enjoyment which the world can give! Solomon assembled around him all that the world calls delightful; he withheld not his heart from any joy; yet all was found to be vanity and vexation of spirit. Many are in the sight of God truly wise to whom philosophy never taught one of her lessons, and many of the poor of this world hath the grace of God made truly happy. Christ was their wisdom and their

joy. Are these your impressions, and do you now feel that without Jesus Christ there would be nothing around you but darkness, and nothing in you but despair?

Do you feel an eager desire for this bread? Hunger is a very strong appetite, and is often employed to point out vehemence of desire after any object; and most urgent is the cry of the starving man for relief. Now, the consciousness of our misery as sinners, and a persuasion of the happiness of those who 'are partakers of Christ,' will produce the most eager wishes, and the most importunate cries for His mercy. Are these the requests of your hearts at this moment? 'O send forth Thy light and Thy truth; visit us with Thy salvation; satisfy us early with Thy mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad in Thee all our days.' Such desires shall be granted, and I trust that this shall be the case in this ordinance, for the Saviour hath said, 'that He satisfies the longing soul, and fills the hungry soul with goodness.' Have your desires been partial and transient, or have they been habitual? Have you sought the grace of Christ, not merely when your consciences were tortured with guilt, or when sickness brought death and judgment to view, but have you felt it as impossible to live in comfort without it as to die in safety? Is your submission to Him, as your teacher, such that no tenet of His offends, and no mandate disgusts you?

The hypocrite may utter his prayers with affected fervour, but this differs as much from the earnestness of genuine piety as the glare of the meteor from the steady effulgence of the sun, or the gilded dross from the solid gold. Should it be suggested to any of you, for the trial of your faith, 'It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to the dogs,' let this be your answer, 'Truth, Lord, I am a dog, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their Master's table.' Then will He feed you with the finest of the wheat, and satisfy you with honey from the rock.

Christ, your Saviour, is the appointed dispenser of this bread. It was to Joseph that Pharaoh committed the distribution of the corn that was in his garners; and when the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread, and he said to all the Egyptians, 'Go to Joseph, and what he saith unto you, do.' 'And it hath pleased the Father that in Christ should all fulness dwell, that from His fulness we might receive grace for grace.' It is said that Joseph opened the storehouses, and sold to the Egyptians; but this bread is the gift of Jesus. He has full authority to dispense

it in what measure, and at what season He pleases; and such is His benevolence and compassion, that He will drive no suppliant sternly awa. 'What parent is there who, if a son ask bread, will give him a stone?' And if this is most unlikely with men, it is impossible with Him who is full of compassion. The communion table is a place where Jesus receives our homage, and distributes His blessings with a sweetness and a liberality which accords with His dying love. You came to it to solicit further measures of wisdom and grace from Him; and to encourage you to present to Him such requests, I repeat to you His own words, 'If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him.' He will neither upbraid you with your unworthiness, nor with the largeness and frequency of your petitions.

You have felt your souls gratified, I trust, in eating this bread. There are many things which are tempting to the eye and to the palate, but which are unwholesome and poisonous; but the blessings of religion fulfil every hope and every promise, and those of them which wear in our apprehension a forbidding aspect, are found to yield the sweetest enjoyment.

The bread of life is the glory of this feast. It is the communion of the body of Christ. It revives the strength of the exhausted, and comforts the hearts of the dying. Many things relished in youth become insipid in age; but this bread is the support of man in his decline, and it is in it alone that he can then find pleasure. Were all the wisdom or the wealth of the world presented to you in place of the grace and the salvation of your Lord, you would despise them as husks, and say of this bread, 'It is meat indeed.'

Be grateful for the share you have obtained of it. Let the thanks of the poor for the meat that perisheth make you ashamed of your scanty gratitude for the bread of life. The Lord is now saying to you, as He did to Elijah, 'Arise, and eat; and he looked, and behold there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head, and he did eat and drink, and laid him down again. And the angel of the Lord came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise, and eat, because the journey is too great for thee; and he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights, to Horeb the mount of God.' You have a toilsome pilgrimage before you, and it is with this bread that you must renew your strength.

You do not imagine that your partaking of this bread of life is to be confined to this ordinance; for your wish is,

‘Lord, evermore give us this bread.’ There are varieties of food adapted for the different periods of human life. Milk is provided for babes, and strong meat for grown-up men; but this bread is the only nourishment of the soul. The wisdom of Christ is the best guide of youth, and His grace is the best support of age. How sad would be the case of a man who, though plentifully fed this day, should be doomed afterwards to famish with hunger! His daily bread must be given him, or life will be destroyed: so there must be a daily supply of the Spirit of Christ, renewed illumination, and increasing strength.

There is no condition which the believer can anticipate in which this bread shall be unnecessary, none in which his own wisdom can direct his way, or his own strength sustain his burden. Yea, this is the bread which you desire to eat in the kingdom of God, and this is the heaven for which you long, even that state in which ‘the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne shall feed you, and lead you to living fountains of water.’ Jesus is the life of all the service, and of all the happiness of the blessed. They are ever fervent in praise, ever active in contemplation, ever lively in enjoyment, and ever melting in tenderness, and this is owing to the continued influence of the Lord Jesus; without which praise would sink, contemplation would flag, enjoyment would languish, and charity would fail. The saints in heaven will feel their dependence on Christ through eternity, and glory to express it to his honour.

Let the Redeemer’s kind attention to your wants incline you to deal your bread to the hungry. This charity is mentioned by Isaiah as one of the characters of a fast which the Lord hath chosen, and it certainly becomes us to consider the case of the poor while we observe this feast of love. The grace commemorated in it should give a new impulse to our beneficence every time we observe it. And it is not merely alms to the poor which you are required to impart, as God hath prospered you, but instruction to the ignorant, counsel to the perplexed, warning to the simple, and comfort to the mourner. ‘Cast thy bread on the waters, and thou shalt find it after many days.’ Though it is not given with any sordid view, it shall be restored in the requital of the grateful, in the mental enjoyment which results from every act of humanity, and in His gracious rewards, who will not forget your labour of love.

ADDRESS LV.

He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him.—JOHN vi. 56.

How low is the idea which some have formed of these expressions ! They have imagined that all our Lord meant by our eating His flesh and drinking His blood, was the participation of the symbols of His sufferings and death. But Jesus would not have promised such blessedness to an act, which may be performed without one sentiment of admiration of His character, or one feeling of attachment to His cause. Christianity is not a religion of form and ceremony, it is the religion of the heart; and the observance of its rites, few and simple, must be accompanied with those various movements of devotion, which ally our worship to that of heaven.

Christians, there is an exercise of soul which must accompany the receiving of these elements, or it will be only an empty ceremony.

To eat Christ's flesh, and to drink His blood, is to believe that He gave Himself a sacrifice for our sins. This is the grand view which the Gospel gives us of the death of Christ. At this Socinians have cavilled, and infidels have blasphemed ; yet the Church shall proclaim it in her testimony, and heaven shall celebrate it in its songs. You must regard Him as expiating your guilt ; as the victim that is bleeding for you. How precious are those tears which flow for my sorrows ! How precious is that blood which streams on the altar for my offences ! The atonement of Christ is the only hope that saves me from despair.

To eat Christ's flesh, and to drink His blood, is to share in the blessings procured by His death, and to trace its connection with them all. He was seized, that we might be set free. His soul was troubled, that we might obtain true peace. And the sublimest enjoyments of heaven spring from the horrors of His agony. I see Him accursed for our happiness, and yielding up His spirit that our souls might live.

To eat Christ's flesh, and to drink His blood, is to feel the influence of His death in exciting us to holiness. The atonement of Christ teaches us, what claims the justice of God hath on our fear, and His grace on our love. Christ's sacrifice of Himself teaches us to withhold nothing from Him, to bear in silence the indignation of the Lord, and to consider sin as the worst and bitterest of all evils. And His death teaches us to die to sin, and to live to righteousness. It is from the cross of

Jesus that you must derive animation to languid piety, and stability to wavering principle. If this warms not the heart, it must be twice dead. From His death, you must learn confidence in prayer, tenderness in penitence, fervour in praise, enlargement in charity, and melting affection in the holy communion. For such purposes He hath said, 'My grace is sufficient for thee.'

And are these hard sayings? No. 'His flesh is meat indeed, and His blood is drink indeed.' His flesh is the food of heaven, and His blood is the wine of the kingdom. It is not like the manna which descended only for the Jews, and which was liable to corruption; it is living bread, and it is given for the life of the world. The manna could only support temporal life, and soon became an object of disgust to the Israelites; but of this food, good men continue to partake with increasing relish. And 'whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.'

'And will God in very deed dwell with man upon the earth?' 'He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him.' But will Christ take up His abode in a place so unworthy of Him, and where corruptions so offensive to Him abound? What is a prince's reposing in a mean cottage to this? Christ comes to His people's hearts, and dwells there, like the sun surrounding himself with clouds, that he may deck them with the most beautiful colours. They are not the place of His transient visits, but of His permanent abode. Light, life, and peace, attest His presence. 'Thus saith the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, I dwell in the humble and contrite spirit.' I scorn not that abode. The life of God is there. Will Christ take such creatures as we are to dwell with Him? He will, for 'He brought me into His banqueting-house;' there I am at present, and His banner over me is love. 'God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.' I deserved to dwell with devouring fire, and to abide in everlasting burnings; but to me it is given for Christ's sake, to dwell in the secret place of the Most High, and to abide under the shadow of the Almighty. The good man's heart is Jehovah's temple; and His altar is the saint's home. No novelty of events or scenes can exclude you from His thoughts; and no obscurity can hide you from His eye. No art can induce Him to leave you; nor can even your ingratitude and folly efface you from His heart. You dwell on His heart amidst all the attractions of the heaven of heavens.

Shun, Christians, the mansion of folly and the tents of sin,

for to this your privileges call you. The gaities of fashionable dissipation but ill accord with Christian seriousness, or the pageantry of the world's vain show with a heart devoted to the realities of eternity. Let your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be kept pure as becomes the temple of God. The hour is at hand when Jesus and you shall have one dwelling, one feast, one triumph, one inheritance, and one throne; and shall not you have one life of holiness at present? Let the life of Jesus be made manifest in your mortal bodies. Let not your hearts be in the house of feasting. 'Take heed lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness.' It will be far more honourable for you to be known as a visitant of the fatherless and widows in their affliction, than as the jovial companion in the festive circle. I recommend not that austerity which shrinks from social intercourse, and whose food is the bread and water of affliction. Religion goes at fit seasons to the scene of innocent indulgence, and, by her courtesy and sweetness, adds a charm to the manners; but she shuns the festivity where slander defames the characters of others, where intemperance never says it is enough, and where the wanton jest and song cherish the vicious propensities of the heart.

Fret not that your dwellings are mean and solitary. It is not the splendour of a dwelling which attracts the Saviour, nor its meanness that repels Him. When discontent points out to you how many things are wanting in your abode necessary to your comfort, let this be your answer, 'Christ dwells here.' The candle of the Lord often shines in poverty's darkest hovel; and His presence cheers the dreary solitude of age, which has outlived every earthly friend.

In fine, remember that your regards to the death of Christ are not to be restricted to the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. You must always bear about with you in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus. We spend not that hour like Christians, in which meditation takes not a flight to Calvary. Of Jesus, and His grace and example, let your hearts and lives be full. 'Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, who endured the cross, despising the shame.'

ADDRESS LVI.

In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink.—JOHN vii. 37.

OUR Lord improved, with admirable propriety, the various objects and occurrences which presented themselves before Him,

for the purposes of religious and moral instruction. His mind was constantly intent on the great objects of His mission, and His wisdom led Him to discern the most favourable seasons, and to choose the fittest methods for the advancement of these. There have been some who, from a zeal guided by neither delicacy nor prudence, have introduced serious topics after incidents by no means adapted to prepare the mind to receive them with advantage. Dislike or laughter have thus been excited at truths which, if brought forward with more propriety, might have charmed the careless, and silenced the scornful. Nor is the mischief confined to the moment ; for whenever the scene is recollected, piety appears in a most degrading association, and the heart turns away from it in disgust. But in our Saviour's history, grace and truth are beautifully combined, and the lessons of religion were always exhibited where they were likely to be most clearly understood and most readily received.

On the last day of the feast of tabernacles, the high priest went in solemn procession to the pool of Siloam, drew from it some water in a golden vessel, and returning to the temple poured it out before the Lord. It was at the close of this ceremony, when the worshippers had been praying for the latter rain, and some of them had been imploring the Most High to bestow the spirit and the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom, that Jesus invited them to come and share of the riches of His grace.

The last day of the feast of tabernacles was called the great day of it, not on account of the sacrifice offered on it ; for while several bullocks were to be slain on the other days, the law required on the eighth and last no more than one ; but the learned have told us that it was a tradition among the Jews, that while other nations had an interest in the other oblations, this one offering was restricted to Israel. On this day they viewed themselves admitted to intimate fellowship with God, as distinguished by Him as His peculiar people ; and they supposed that, like an earthly prince who delights far more in a small collation with his chief favourite, that they may have an opportunity of some familiar converse, than in a vast promiscuous entertainment, God felt special complacency in this intercourse with them, and bestowed in it His most valuable blessings. These ideas of God's peculiar interest in them, produced a rapturous joy which they were accustomed to express in all the outward tokens of triumphant exultation, and thus did this day come to be regarded as the happiest and best part of the festival. From such vain and bigoted conceits our Lord calls them to the spirit of goodness, and to the fellowship of the Gospel.

Though we cannot use these words as an invitation to the

communion table, they suggest many meditations which may be useful to Christians in the Lord's Supper; and we, on good grounds, consider the commemoration of Christ's death as the most important service of the present solemnity. It is for this that other acts of worship are preparatory; and it is in this ordinance that the noblest actings of grace are exhibited, and our friendship with Christ is most delightfully sealed.

But who are the persons whom our Lord invites to partake of the blessings of His grace? They are such as thirst for happiness. This is the object of universal desire and pursuit, for wherever we cast our eyes, we see proofs of the existence and operation of this principle, and find reason to lament its improper direction. Some seek it in the acquisition of wealth, others in the career of ambition; some in the indulgence of appetite, and others in curious inquiries, or in vain speculation. Men thus low in their views, and thus carnal in their taste, have no relish for the blessings, and no capacity for the exercise of religion, and are regardless of these amidst their eager solicitude for earthly things. But though the object of ardent pursuit should be attained, the heart is still unsatisfied, and, after a sad series of disappointed hopes, it sinks under the consciousness that all is vanity. Now, to such wanderers Christ directs His pitying counsel; and, while He blames their folly, calls them to the fountain of life and joy.

Christians, ye were once engaged in following vanity, and you would have persisted in it unless Divine grace had showed you your folly, and taught you where to find rest. It was thus that Jesus qualified you for observing this ordinance, by elevating your desires, purifying your taste, and imbuing you with the spirit of devotion.

But this invitation of our Lord is addressed to those who are earnestly desirous of the blessings of salvation, who have been convinced of their guilt, corruption, and misery, and whose eyes are directed to the cross of Jesus as the only quarter where relief can be obtained. Have you felt the wish that the voice of pardon would still your accusing consciences, and that the power of Divine grace would subdue your evil passions? Would you esteem it a favour worthy of your perpetual gratitude, were you to obtain one glimpse of hope, one drop from the fountain of mercy, one moment of holy peace? The water of life can alone moisten the parched throat, and can alone cool the burning heart. Jesus only can teach the despairing soul to hope, and enable the slave of corruption to break his chains, and to become free.

In Jesus Christ everything is to be found that is necessary

for the soul's happiness and salvation. Here there is instruction by which the dark and perverted mind is taught to know and to love the truth; righteousness which answers every charge, and entitles to every blessing; sanctification which forms in the soul the temper of heaven; consolation which quiets every alarm, and heals every wound; and redemption which liberates every faculty of the soul from the thralldom of sin, and every member of the body from the power of the grave.

The way to this fountain of life is open. Springs famed for their salubrious qualities are often situated in places which it is very difficult to approach; but to this fountain there is a path so plain that the simple will not err, if the desire of his heart is directed to the Saviour. It is described clearly in the Bible; and it has been trodden by thousands. 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access into that grace in which believers stand.'

Have you, my friends, made application to Christ by faith for salvation? Unless this has been the case, you have no right to approach His table. Have you turned away from every false hope, and are you willing to receive Him in His whole character as a Saviour? Have you been persuaded of the all-sufficiency of His grace, and are you determined that you will never solicit pardon but at His feet? This is the language of the truly humble and contrite, 'Though not a drop of the water of life should be vouchsafed to me, and though I should suffer most painfully from tormenting thirst, yet I will never seek relief anywhere else. I will cry to Him for mercy while utterance remains, and when my tongue, failing for thirst, can articulate the language of supplication no longer, my looks, and sighs, and tears, will show that this is the strongest wish of my heart: Lord save me, I perish.' Such desires have been awakened by the Holy Spirit, such purposes are animated by His grace, and for you His living water is prepared. He will make you drink of the rivers of His pleasures, and bless you with some measure of His own felicity.

Application to Christ by faith for His blessings is followed by the sweetest satisfaction. The pleasure felt by the thirsty traveller in the refreshing draught, for which he has journeyed through clouds of dust, and over burning sands, is an emblem of their felicity, who having believed enter into rest. As it will not be with a single draught that this traveller will be satisfied, so grace will be importunate for further measures of light, holiness, and comfort; and Jesus invites us to drink abundantly.

While other streams are dried up, this fountain ever flows, and is ever full. The more of Christ's Spirit you receive, you will be the more holy; and your happiness will increase according as you share in the joys of His salvation. Let not the penitent hesitate to approach this fountain, and let not his hand tremble as it lifts the cup of salvation to his lips. You can see no indication in His countenance that you are unwelcome, and hear nothing from Him to shake your confidence in His gracious promise, 'Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out.' Never was a penitent excluded from His house, and never was a humble suppliant sent empty away.

Some of you perhaps have not found the joy in believing which you had anticipated? but this is owing to the weakness of your faith, or to your having displeased Him by some presumption in your hopes, or some selfishness in your wishes. He intends to try your submission to His will, and your patience under disappointments; and if you suffer with meekness, and pray without ceasing, He will bless you with the peace that passeth understanding.

The circumstances connected with this invitation present to you the most interesting views of our Lord's character, and many practical counsels. It shows us the patience and generosity of our Lord in a most striking light. He had told the Jews that in a little He would go to Him that sent Him. Instead of imploring His continuance, they said with the most virulent scorn, 'Will He go to the dispersed Jews among the Gentiles, and try to gain them to His party, or will He teach the Gentiles?' These things they deemed incompatible with the character of Messiah, and the last expedient of a sinking impostor. And how does our Lord answer this insolent taunt? The only reply He makes to it is, to invite them more fully, and to press them more earnestly to receive His salvation. Let us learn from this conduct to reflect with wonder and gratitude on His long-suffering to us, and to persist in our efforts to convince and to reclaim the wicked in spite of all their stubbornness, and though we should receive from them the most abusive treatment. 'Consider Him who endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied, and faint in your minds.'

This invitation was delivered with great boldness. He stood on some high place in the temple, where He might be seen by all around. Though the officers were at hand who were commissioned to seize Him, though the Pharisees and Scribes were in an adjacent chamber plotting His destruction, and though many of the people were prejudiced against Him, He did not

skulk in a secret corner, but stood in the view of all, undaunted in the cause, and confiding in the protection of His Father. And let none of you, from the dread of the ridicule of the world, or the sarcasms of the scoffer, be afraid to testify your adherence to Christ. Let us not hesitate to confess Him before men, who was so courageous in instructing and saving us.

It was delivered with great earnestness. He lifted up His voice in such a manner that the surrounding multitude might hear Him. Jesus saw them sunk in ignorance and depravity; the prejudices which induced many to turn away from His counsel; the strong delusions by which their false guides had infatuated them, and the misery to which they were hurrying; and He spoke to them in a tone and manner adapted to engage their attention and to win their hearts. And let this induce you to cherish and to express an ardent and affectionate zeal for the spiritual good of others, and while you 'remember your affliction and misery, the wormwood and the gall,' you will feel increasing energy in urging their approach to the wells of salvation.

It was a most extensive invitation. He excepts not the men who came to seize Him, nor those who were bent on His ruin. The hand of mercy can reach its object in the lowest depth of distress, and in the utmost extremity of guilt. Such is the liberality of Christ's heart, and such is the power of His grace, that He makes the sinner welcome to approach Him from the ends of the earth, and from the brink of hell. Let him come, though he is the chief of sinners, and though he has grown old in iniquity. Let him come and bring multitudes with him; and if none will accompany him, let him draw near alone, and though the whole world should call on him to keep back. Let him come although he has nothing to recommend him to My notice, for the water of life flows, not for those that deserve, but for those that need it. Let him approach with enlarged expectations, and let him be assured that he cannot come too frequently. Keep this circumstance in remembrance, to give extension to all your offices of charity, to teach you to resist the error of those who would limit the calls of the Gospel, to support your own hope in Christ when God is writing bitter things against you, and to enable you to repress in others every suggestion of despair.

It is a striking circumstance in this invitation, that it was delivered at the close of a great religious solemnity. For several days the Jews had been observing one of their solemn feasts, and the people were now about to retire from the temple, and some of them were to go to distant parts of the country,

where they might never see or hear our Lord any more. He had already preached salvation to them on some of the preceding days, yet He cannot think of parting with them till He had called them in a most liberal and earnest manner to take the water of life. An offer of mercy is Christ's farewell. These were His parting words, and we trust that they were spirit and life to some.

When our solemnities are closing, and the worshippers are going away and shall not all meet again in one assembly till they appear together in judgment, the ministers of religion should part with them as our Lord did, and speak to them as if we saw them on their death-beds, or were addressing them from our own. Let them carry the offers of mercy to their houses, to their business, and to their last hour. You should retire from the temple as if you were going into eternity, and feel as if the last cry of mercy had reached your ears, and as if the light of life had shed on you its parting gleam. To some of you this may be the last communion; in a few days the rage of disease may dry up your strength, and your soul, thirsting for Jesus, may cry, 'Hear me speedily, O Lord, my spirit faileth.' His grace shall not fail you in time of need. He will form you to a tranquil patience and to a joyful hope; and when your appointed course of suffering is ended, He will conduct you to your eternal rest, 'where the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed you, and lead you to living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from your eyes.' Amen.

ADDRESS LVII.

Never man spake like this Man.—JOHN vii. 46.

WHAT a striking character of our Lord as a teacher! It proceeds from a quarter where we might have expected the misrepresentations of prejudice, or the scoff of contempt; not the language of zealous admiration. It is probable that these officers had imbibed the enmity of the rulers against Jesus of Nazareth, and had regarded, with jealousy and rage, His growing influence, as menacing the ruin of their power. They had long since learned to suppress the relents of pity for the wretched victims of tyranny or justice; and the voice of misery, in its most melting tones, was lost on their hearts. To them, it is likely, religion was known only in its forms; yet such was the power of our Lord's discourse, that their hands and hearts

were bound, and, in defiance of the displeasure of their proud and cruel masters, they return without Him as their prisoner, and state His unrivalled excellence in exhibiting the truths of God, as the reason why they had not brought Him.

To this encomium, Christians, your hearts assent. Never man spake with such wisdom as Jesus. On Him the Spirit of understanding rested, and He taught the truths which man is called to believe, and the duties which are required of him, in a manner, and at seasons, the best adapted to the characters and circumstances of His hearers. He knew how to oppose every prejudice, and how to touch every chord of feeling. The deep things of God, and all the recesses of the human heart, were open to Him. While the disputers of this world were darkening counsel by words without knowledge, and bewildering themselves and their followers in the dark mazes of vain speculation, Christ made the simple wise to salvation; taught the guilty repentance unto life; called the anxious mind to confidence in providence; stimulated the charitable, by revealing the rewards of judgment; and made hypocrisy to tremble under all its disguises. His object was not to amuse, or to astonish; but to instruct, to reform, and to save.

Never man spake with such majesty as Jesus did. He did not indeed, like some who deem themselves masters in Israel, show, by His discourses, His contempt of the understanding and the condition of His hearers. His compassion for the souls of men, and His wish to enlighten and convert them, made Him stoop to modes of address which were familiar, but never low. The diamond lost not its brilliance, though it was set in a humbler metal than gold. Still, in those discourses in which He showed most meekness of wisdom, He spoke with such solemnity, energy, and independence, that the people were astonished at His doctrine. 'He spake as one having authority, and not as the scribes.' He never stooped to court applause, to flatter the populace, or to fawn upon the great. The rage of the crowd, the cabals of the scribes, and the violence of Herod, He boldly defied. His doctrine was directed against sinful habits, however general; and against secret wickedness, though in high places. Much of the majesty of other speakers was derived from adventitious circumstances, from the splendour of their robes, or the magnificence of the places where they addressed their hearers. It was the blaze of royalty spread round the throne of judgment; and the echo of the thunder of eloquence from the roofs and pillars of palaces and temples, that often led the multitude to exclaim, 'It is the voice of a god, and not of a man;' but whether we view our

Lord teaching from the mountain, or the fishing boat, or the table of hospitality, we see such a glory as constrains us to cry out, 'Who teacheth like God?'

Christians, are ye His disciples indeed; His disciples, not in name, but in spirit and in obedience? Have you received the truth in the light and love of it? Is it your most delightful posture to sit at Christ's feet, and to hear His word? Do you keep His sayings, and ponder them in your hearts? Do you count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus your Lord? Then to you Wisdom says, 'Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine that I have mingled.'

'Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of your profession, Christ Jesus.'

Never man spake with such eloquence as this Man. Eloquence has wrought greater wonders than the sword. Like the lightning of heaven, it hath, at one flash, struck the hearts of thousands, and made them throb with admiration, with pity, or with rage. Ferocious crowds have sunk under its thunder, and dispirited armies have rushed on to the cannon's mouth. But what eloquence was ever heard like His, 'into whose lips grace was poured!' At His voice, contempt was turned into wonder, and aversion into love. His eloquence palsied the arm of violence, and struck the audacious blasphemer dumb. At His call, the obdurate sinner relinquished his vices, and pining sorrow raised its eyes in hope. 'All bare Him witness, and marvelled at the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth.'

Never man spake with such plainness as this Man. He preached the Gospel to the poor, and to those whom spiritual pride scorned. He used not the swelling words of vanity, by which the half-learned try to conceal their ignorance, and the pedant seeks to excite admiration. 'He sought out, and set in order, acceptable words,' and, by the most instructive and beautiful parables, made the weakest understand His lessons. Though He knew the unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter, He spoke in the language of mortals, and in its most perspicuous terms. There were times, indeed, in which He judged it necessary to puzzle and confound the disputer and the scribe; but it was His most frequent exercise to reveal the mysteries of the kingdom to babes.

Never man spake with such tenderness as this Man. The compassion and kindness of His heart gave to His manner a

melting sweetness. 'His doctrine dropped as the small rain on the tender herb, and distilled as the dew upon the grass.' When He warned the wicked, it was with the earnestness of pity; and when He comforted the feeble-minded, it was with the softest tones of a parent's love. Who, that is not lost to feeling, can read such passages as the parable of the prodigal son, and Christ's farewell address to His disciples, without being melted? His words came from a heart where compassion flowed. When He reproved, men saw on His countenance, not the scowl of malice, but the sadness of pity; and when He comforted, it was not in the careless language that indicated a heart at ease, but in the kindest accents of sympathy.

We trust, Christians, that He hath spoken to your hearts with a wisdom which hath expanded your views; with a majesty which has thrown down every proud imagination; with an eloquence which has brought every thought into subjection to Him; with a plainness as if it was the instruction of a father; and with a tenderness peculiar to Him who hath the tongue of the learned, to speak a word in season to the weary. 'Good and upright is the Lord, therefore will He teach sinners in the way.' The most solemn and melting of His lessons are taught on Calvary; and while the horrors of His death rise to the view, the voice issues from His lips which speaks peace to His saints.

Christians, adhere stedfastly to the Apostle of your profession. Listen not to the novel speculations of those who bring you another Gospel; and approach not the place where infidelity spreads her smoke, and casts around her firebrands, arrows, and death. Ye know your Master's words; and it is by continuing in their faith and influence, that you shall experience the happiness which they promise. 'I am the light of the world; he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.' The most acceptable homage you can pay to your Teacher, and the truest respect you can show Him, is obedience to His instructions. He will reject, with abhorrence, the claim which the immoral professor will advance to His regard: 'Lord, Lord, have we not eaten and drunk in Thy presence, and Thou hast taught in our streets?' 'The servant that knows his Lord's will, and doth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes.' God will judge men, not by the stores of their memory, the fluency of their talk, or the blaze of their profession, but by their temper and conduct. 'If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.'

ADDRESS LVIII.

Dost thou believe on the Son of God?—JOHN ix. 35.

THIS question our Lord put to the man whose eyes He had opened, that He might lead him to proper conceptions of his Benefactor's character, and that He might show His power to raise the soul from darkness to marvellous light. This question, Christians, He addresses to you, 'Do ye now believe?'

This is a very solemn question. Consider who it is that proposes it. It is He 'who searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts.' It is He whose eye is upon you, to mark what attention you pay to it, and who hath power to punish, in a manner the most dreadful, those who disregard it and trifle with it. The Son of God, by whom this question is put, is the Judge to whom you must soon give an account of yourselves; and there is something very awful in His thus taking cognizance of your sentiments and feelings respecting Him, and anticipating the scrutiny of that tremendous day. The answer to this question must rank us among the heirs of heaven, or among the children of wrath. This is a question which will remain an interesting object of inquiry in every age. There are questions which one age deems grave and serious, and which in another are made the objects of derision; but this is one which cannot be stripped of its solemnity, and which no ridicule and no sophistry can render contemptible.

This is a question in which every one of you must view himself as interested, and which every one must answer for himself. 'Examine yourselves whether you be in the faith.'

Have you a proper knowledge of Christ's real character? Have you contemplated, with attention and delight, the various representations which are given of Him in Scripture? Do you regard Him as the image of the invisible God, the grand subject of ancient prophecy, the only atonement for human guilt, and the perfect pattern of moral excellence, the way, the truth, and the life? On every earthly object I can close my eye, if to me it is given 'to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple.' To every earthly object I can close my heart, if to me it is given 'to know the riches of the glory of this mystery, Christ in me the hope of glory.'

Let me ask you on what grounds you yield your assent to the truth of these representations of the character of Christ? Is it because you have been trained up in this persuasion from your infancy, and on account of the venerable names which

maintain that He is the Son of the living God? Or is it because, in the testimony of the Gospel respecting Him, you have marked such bright evidence, and such captivating energy, that you could no longer refuse to receive it? The assent of genuine faith is so far from being liable to the charge of credulity, that it displays a candour which repels the suggestions of prejudice, a strength of understanding which appreciates the force of evidence, and an integrity of heart that yields to it.

Do you rely on the power and the grace of Jesus for life and salvation? Do you consider Him not merely as the propitiation for sin, as the friend of the miserable, and as the only sure foundation of human happiness; but do you rely on Him for the pardon of your transgressions, and look to Him for consolation and rest to your souls? The Saviour is most worthy of our firmest reliance. In trusting in Christ, we lean not on a broken reed, but on the rock of ages, and on the pillar and ground of truth. Is your reliance on Christ partial? Is it accompanied with confidence in excellences in yourselves? or is Jesus all your hope? 'We are the circumcision who worship God in the spirit, who rejoice in Christ Jesus, and put no confidence in the flesh.'

Has your faith on the Son of God that influence which true faith ever hath? True faith purifies the heart. No man can believe that Christ gave Himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity, and that 'blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God,' and indulge vicious propensities in his soul, or live in the practice of sin.

True faith overcomes the world. The eye that looks to celestial splendour will not be dazzled with the vain pomp of this world; nor will the afflictions of a moment render that heart whose treasure is in heaven a fountain of tears.

Faith works by love. The perception of Christ's excellence directs the affections to Him, and the consciousness of the relation of our fellow-creatures to their Lord and ours, will warm the heart with the most fervent charity. It is not in the infidel's heart that you will find the sacred glow of benevolent feeling. His words may be smooth; in animated language he may exhibit the excellence of love to man, and the pleasure which its exercise yields; but war is in his heart. He tries to harden man's heart against the counsels of his best friend, and to dissuade perishing mortals from fleeing to their only hope. It is in the man who believes on the Son of God that you will find brotherly kindness existing in its strongest degree, and manifested in its noblest and most valuable forms.

Has your faith this practical tendency? Are the iniquities

which you once regarded, the objects of your abhorrence? Can you leave the world to the fools who dote on it, and rejoice in God's name all the day? What know ye of the charity that suffereth long and is kind? For true believers the table of the Son of God is spread; and we trust that, when He comes, He will find faith there.

Let faith contemplate the suffering Redeemer in the severity of His anguish, in the perfection of His sacrifice, and in the love of His heart: and may these words of the Apostle Peter be fulfilled in your present exercise, 'In Him believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.' And may 'your life in the flesh be by the faith of the Son of God, who loved you, and gave Himself for you.'

Give glory to the Author of your faith, that to you this precious grace has been given. This is a most valuable gift; for it hath love for its source, and salvation for its end. Faith is a principle which effectually guards the purity of the heart, and brings to it, even in the depth of sorrow, consolation from heaven. It produces triumphs more splendid than any which history celebrates; and, uniting the soul to the Redeemer, applies to it His inestimable blessings.

Endeavour to grow in faith. We wish to have reason to say, with regard to you, 'We are bound to give thanks for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you aboundeth.' There is a period at which, when other trees arrive, their growth terminates, and they begin to wither and to decay; but there is no such period in the growth of faith. In the valley of the shadow of death, cold and dark as it is, faith hath been seen more strong and lively than in any other place. 'These all died in faith.'

Remember, that 'as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.' What is it that proves the life and power of the spring? It is when its waters flow with unabated fulness and strength. Incorruptible integrity, active beneficence, and endearing gentleness, are the best evidences of faith, and the arguments which most effectually recommend it to others. O that the zeal which hath been thrown away in idle disputation about the nature of faith, had been employed in urging and exhibiting its practical influence! And may it appear in the discourse of Christians, surrounded not with the subtleties of metaphysics, or the dreams of enthusiasm, but with the beauties of holiness.

Your faith will be tried; and take heed that it possess such

a degree of strength as will endure the trial. When temptation assails it, let it be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. When sophistry labours to beguile you, let it be sufficiently quick and powerful to detect and to expose it. And in dark scenes, where God speaks only in wrath, let it say, 'Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.'

O ye, who are complaining that your faith is like a tree which the lightning hath smitten, that its trunk is shattered, and that its branches are naked and broken; go to the compassionate Redeemer, and say to Him with tears, 'Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief.' Instead of indulging in unavailing lamentation, use diligently every means which He hath appointed, for strengthening the things that remain and are ready to die. In saying to you, 'O ye of little faith, wherefore did ye doubt?' He acknowledges the reality of your faith, while He complains of your suspicions of His mercy, and stirs you up to form views of His character more worthy of Him, and more consoling to yourselves.

While this question of our Lord has been put to His disciples at His table, it is one which claims the attention of every human being, and which I wish you to propose to the serious consideration of all with whom you are connected. Address it to the young. Youth is said to be the season of credulity; for it has not the caution by which experience guards from the cunning craftiness of those who lie in wait to deceive. Happy is it when it is distinguished by that faith which makes Christ, the wisdom of God, its early, its only choice; and when it prefers to all the gayest pleasures of the world, joy and peace in believing. Have you friends engaged in the pursuit of human learning? Call their attention to Him who is full of grace and truth. While you trace their progress in human science, be solicitous that they may possess the knowledge which is life eternal. Address it thus to those who are busy in amassing the world—'You count your thousands of gold and silver; but do you never ask, Are we rich in faith? You are diligent to know the state of your flocks, and to look well to your herds; are you as diligent to make your calling and election sure? You complain that you have not the same worldly advantages as others; but do you never think, Have I obtained like precious faith with saints through the righteousness of God, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ?' Have you aged friends? Ask them, Are you supporting your feeble and trembling hearts, on the promises of the Redeemer, and are you waiting for the consolation of Israel? And let it be said to the dying, Have you no reason to dread that awful sentence, 'If ye believe

not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins?' Can you submit without dismay to the power of death, relying on the grace of the Redeemer, and on His promise of life eternal? Can you join with the Apostle in saying, 'I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that day?' By such questions, proposed in a manner modest, serious, and affectionate, you will induce them to lay open their hearts to you; and you will have it in your power to address to them counsels, warnings, and consolations, for which they may for ever bless you.

In a short time the ministers of religion must give in their account respecting you; and while they state the doctrines which they taught, may they declare the affectionate reception which you gave to them in the Apostle's language, 'So we preached, and so ye believed.' And may the great Redeemer bear you this testimony, 'I gave unto them the words which Thou gavest me, and they did receive them; and they knew that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send Me.'

ADDRESS LIX.

I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.—JOHN x. 10.

WHAT an interesting view of the object of our Lord's coming is this! It was not the end of His coming to inflict on us the punishment which we deserved, and to consign us to the horrors of the second death. Though this had been its object, none could have accused Him of injustice, and none could have repelled His hand. But He came to procure for us spiritual and eternal life by the death of the cross, to raise us from a state of condemnation to peace with God, and not only to remove the pollution of our souls, and the miseries of our hearts, but to adorn them with the graces of His image, and to fill them with the joys of His Spirit. It is a most striking phrase which is here employed to represent the excellence of His salvation, and it points out for your present meditation the privileges of redemption, as far surpassing all that man possessed before the Fall.

The righteousness which the saints possess far transcends that of Adam in innocence, which was only the righteousness of a creature, which could not of itself merit the blessedness of heaven, and which was liable to change. But the righteous-

ness of Christ is Divine ; it entitles to glory, and it is everlasting. Our first parents in innocence were excelled by angels in the brightness of their powers, the fervour of their affections, and the sublimity of their worship ; yet so conscious are they of their inferiority to the ‘ Lord our Righteousness,’ that in His presence they cover their faces with their wings, and celebrate the worth of the Lamb that was slain, while not a harp is silent throughout all their orders, and not a thought questions His unrivalled glory.

The covenant made with you is far more excellent than the one made with Adam. The covenant of works was made immediately with Adam, but the covenant of grace was made with Christ as the Head and Mediator of His people. The promises of the covenant of works were conditional, but those of the covenant of grace are free. In the covenant of works, the Divine pity and compassion could not be exhibited, but the covenant of grace displays the tender mercies of our God. The covenant of works contained no security for the continuance of Adam in innocence, and it held out neither comfort nor hope to the guilty ; but the covenant of grace is a refuge for the miserable, and in the use of the appointed means of watchfulness and prayer, it provides for the perseverance in holiness of all who are brought within its bond. God will not abandon them, and He will not suffer them to turn away from Him. In this covenant Jehovah glories as displaying His wisdom and His love ; it is the study and delight of good men while they live, and they have spent their last breath in expressing the confidence and the hope which it had inspired. How delightful have been the views which good men have had of it at the communion table, while they beheld it ratified in the blood of the cross ; and it is my earnest wish that you may now be influenced to say of it, ‘ It is all my salvation, and it is all my desire.’ This covenant is the ark in which the pious are secure when the floods swell, and in which they are kept in perfect peace, while the hearts of worldly men are failing them for fear in seasons of private calamity or public disaster.

The grace formed in Christians is superior to that possessed by Adam. He was created in the image of God ; and though this image, as restored in regeneration, is not completed till the hour of death, it is distinguished by excellences not to be found in the character of the first man ; and when it reaches its destined perfection, the new creature shall be filled with all the fulness of God. The Spirit of Christ dwelt not in Adam. In a paradise where flourished every tree good for food, or pleasant to the eye, that faith could not operate which rejoices

in God in the gloomiest scene of want and desolation. In the state of perfect innocence there could be no place for the repentance which is to God a pleasing sacrifice; and, amidst perfect felicity, the fortitude and patience could not be displayed which glory in tribulation. Had Adam retained his integrity, the absence of all misery would have precluded those exertions of sympathy and beneficence which are so good and so acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour. In the scene of unmingled kindness, there could be no call for that forbearance and forgiveness which must be so often exercised in a world where offences so frequently come, and in which the generous power of the Christian temper is so strikingly manifested in repressing the fiercest impulse of nature.

We read of a river that went out of Eden to water the garden, but there that living water did not flow which sanctifies the polluted and quickens the dead. There was the tree of knowledge of good and evil, but man was prohibited to touch it; and the tree of life, which was guarded from his approach. But you are invited to draw near to Him in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and who is the bestower of grace and glory.

Like the prodigal son, who had returned to his father's house, ye feel a gratitude and a joy beyond that of the elder brother who had never left it; and while your gracious parent clothes you with the best robe, and satisfies you as with marrow and fatness, angels will not complain of your reception, or envy your felicity, but will magnify the Lord with you.

The enjoyments of the redeemed are also superior to those of Adam in innocence. Were we to suppose that good men were only raised by Christ to the enjoyments with which Adam was blessed, the remembrance of the guilt and misery which preceded them must give them a sweetness which could not be felt by one to whom sin and sorrow were unknown. In walking with God, he could not feel that degree of delight of which you are conscious at a communion table, when you remember that you were once afar off, and were brought nigh by the blood of Jesus. In partaking of the pleasures of paradise, he could not be conscious of that exquisite gratitude which you feel, while you are in the garden of your beloved and eating his pleasant fruit, and when you remember your wanderings in the land of drought and of the shadow of death. No flower of paradise could charm the eye or the smell, like the Rose of Sharon; and no dominion over the works of God, and no homage paid

by man to the Deity, as 'the priest of nature,' can be compared to that royal priesthood to which redemption advances you.

There will be many things in the heaven of the redeemed which could not have been found in that of innocent Adam. The heaven of Adam would have wanted the memorials of the Lamb's sufferings, the song of His worth, and the participation of His glory. The Lamb in the midst of the throne as it had been slain, is the most interesting object in heaven to a redeemed sinner; the song of the Lamb is the sweetest of its anthems; and the marriage supper of the Lamb is the most delightful of its enjoyments. To these objects let your hearts now rise, and let them give a heavenly tendency to all your future conduct.

Christians, you are here presented with an answer to this question which has long perplexed the reflecting mind, 'why such an event as the fall of man was permitted to take place under the government of a holy and benevolent Being?' God suffered man to fall, because He had determined, by the mediation of His Son, to raise the objects of His mercy to a nobler excellence and to a sublimer felicity. We are told that, at the erection of the second temple, many of the fathers who had seen the first, wept sore, because it was so inferior to it in magnificence and glory; but when we contemplate the building of mercy, we may rejoice in its being in all respects superior to that which was reared when man was made upright. How lofty are its towers, and how beautiful its palaces! This is my rest for ever; I will walk round it now in holy admiration, mark it with rapture advancing to its destined consummation, and hope to join in the shout with which its head-stone will be brought forth, 'Grace, grace unto it.'

Your Lord gloried in avowing that it was the object of His coming to give this life. The conqueror who comes to pillage and to subjugate a country, hath no reason to boast of this, for no glory can arise from the tears of the oppressed, the desolation of the flourishing, and the slaughter of the helpless; but Jesus came to loose the bands of wickedness, to bless the miserable, and to save the lost. He felt the greatest complacency in this object. He knew that, in order to our acceptance, purity, and salvation, He must be forsaken of God, and crucified as a malefactor, and that, ere the blessings of the new covenant could be imparted to us, He must encounter the united rage of earth and hell; but He saw the bright glories which would arise from His cross to God, and the high felicity which would result from it to man, and, in the prospect of it, was eager to advance, and willing to die. This coming

of your Lord deserves your most cordial welcome. When He rode into Jerusalem, the multitude spread their garments, and strewed branches of trees in the way, and shouted, Hosanna to the Son of David; and this is a pattern for you to copy. Let us spread in His way all our talents and all our attainments, and let our blessings rest on His head.

Let your labours in Christ's service be abundant. Satisfy not yourselves with a partial victory over corruption, with a scanty donation to the cause of piety and charity, when it is in the power of your hand to give more, with a hasty visit to the house of mourning, and with a few feeble efforts to promote the interests of your Redeemer's kingdom, or a formal observance of the exercises of devotion. Crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts, do good to all as you have opportunity, bear one another's burdens, be zealous supporters of every plan for enlightening and for improving society, and fervent in spirit serving the Lord.

Envy not the men of the world, when their corn, and their wine, and their oil abound. In the fulness of their sufficiency they are in straits. When surrounded with what others deem all the materials of happiness, they feel that something is wanting, the attainment of which they consider as essential to their fame or their pleasure, and they can carry nothing hence. The hand that counted its thousands of gold and silver shall in death be as empty as that of the beggar, and the pampered glutton shall only be the fuller repast for the worm. But in your portion ye feel a joy suited to its extent, value, and security. 'All things are yours, for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.'

Rejoice that Christ will still come in the influences of His grace to quicken and to save. There are many objects of His mercy who are to rise into being in the different ages of the world, with regard to whom Jesus feels, 'Them also must I bring in,' sanctify, and save; and ye may exult in the blessed hope of His second coming, when He will swallow up death in victory. In changing your vile bodies, and fashioning them like to His own glorious body, He will give them a beauty and a splendour, a vigour and activity, capacities for service and enjoyment, which they never possessed here. Then will Jesus feel the joy which was set before Him consummated, when He is glorified in the perfect excellence and felicity of His saints, and is admired in all them that believe.

ADDRESS LX.

Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again.—JOHN x. 17

THESE words strongly express the voluntary nature of our Lord's sufferings and death. He was led like a lamb, silent and unresisting, to the altar. He laid down for us, not what was of trivial worth, but His life—a life of which He fully knew and felt the value. He laid it down, not with the reluctance with which a man parts with an object which he would gladly retain, but with all the promptitude of generous feeling. It was the last and the greatest sacrifice of His love.

When men are dying after a struggle with pain or disease, the sinking of the voice commonly precedes the termination of life, and the articulation is faint and indistinct; but, to show that our Lord's strength was not exhausted, and that He died not because He could bear no more, He cried with a loud voice, 'Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit;' and when He had said this, He dismissed His soul.

With what pleasure did David contemplate the cheerfulness with which the people presented their offerings for the house of the God of Israel: 'As for me, in the uprightness of mine heart, I have willingly offered all these things; and now I have seen with joy Thy people which are present here offer willingly to Thee.' And hath not Jesus far higher grounds of exultation, in that generous alacrity with which He had laid down His life, that mercy might be built up for ever? In their offerings of precious stones, and of talents of gold and silver, I see the triumph of piety over the spirit of vanity and avarice; but in Christ's sacrifice of Himself, I see the triumph of zeal and of love, over the ingratitude and impiety of a rebellious world. 'Ye are not redeemed with corruptible things, such as silver and gold; but with the precious blood of Christ.'

Now the Son of Man is a breathless corpse. And will He remain so? Man cannot recall the breath to his nostrils, nor renew the current of blood in his veins. He, at whose command thousands lay down their lives, cannot deliver one soul, not even his own, from the power of the grave. The mandates of authority, the skill of science, and the cries of affection, would there be employed in vain. There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain, and, I may add, to recall it; but Jesus had: 'I have power to lay down My life, and power

to take it up again.' Christ rose from the grave in greater majesty than He went to it, but not with less love. When the soul returned from paradise to the body it had quitted, it came not less disposed to befriend us. The infirmities of human nature attended Him no further than the tomb, there they left Him for ever; but its kind affections are the glory of His character, and in their fullest glow He issued from the cold grave. He went to heaven in a more triumphant manner than He descended to earth, but equally attached to our interests, and equally zealous in our cause. He ascends the throne to give repentance and remission, and lifts the censer, that He may offer up our prayers. That zeal for His Father's glory, which led to the sacrifice of Calvary, prompts Him to employ the energies of His power in subduing the nations to God. From the rivers of life rise those dews, which He sends down to our parched earth, to call forth 'those fruits of righteousness, which are, by Jesus Christ, to the praise and glory of God.' He entered into His glory, and it is a glory which He permits His people to call theirs. Now, Christians, look to your dying and living Lord. Claim Him in the fruits of His death, and in the power of His resurrection, and say, 'If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.' What does Jesus call you to lay down for Him? Peter once said to Him, 'I will lay down my life for Thy sake.' But this proof of your affection He doth not require. He calls you to lay down those follies and errors, which are no less dishonourable to Him than injurious to yourselves. Sacrifice them without one effort to save, and without one cry to spare them, without one sigh of reluctance, or one moment of hesitation. Lay them down, to take them up again no more.

The idea of His Father's love Jesus cherished through the whole of His sufferings. When He thought of the shame of the cross, His heart exulted that His Father would love Him for that degradation. When He thought of its agonies, He felt assured that His Father would love Him for these pangs. Let us think of the spirit which shone in these sufferings, and we will see how dear they must have been to His Father. How dear to the righteous Lord that loveth righteousness must not that regard to the honour of justice have been, which made Jesus welcome the extremity of pain and sorrow, rather than that it should receive the least taint, or have the smallest of its claims unfulfilled! How dear to Him that delighteth in mercy must not that love have been which was stronger than death!

Never did the glory of God shine on earth as in the face of the dying Jesus.

But the Father loves Him for what He does for our salvation in heaven. He loves Him for every prayer He presents, for every blessing He bestows, for the preparation He makes for our happiness, and for every soul that He welcomes to glory. He loves Him for the grace of His throne, as well as for the virtues of His cross. He sees His ardent benevolence and zeal, glowing with a power which no elevation and no enjoyment can damp, and which no length of time and no magnitude of effort can exhaust. My Son's throne is like My own, a throne of grace, and His sceptre is like Mine, a sceptre of righteousness.

And shall not we love Him, as dying for us, and as rising again? We see the glories of love in the Saviour's shame; the power of love in His exhausted strength; and the depth of love in the grave of Jesus; and seest thou no evidence of love where the Saviour now is? His crown sparkles, His chariot is paved, and His heart melts with love. I will love Thee, O Lord. Calvary and heaven present me with incitements to love Thee, which my heart shall ever feel. How delightful is the thought, that your affections terminate on the object of the Father's delight! He who is supreme in your hearts, is supreme in that of His Father. The man who loves the world, loves that which God sets at nought; and he who loves sin, loves that which God abhors; but you love One who is the elect of infinite wisdom, and the delight of infinite goodness.

Let us learn from this scene, Christians, what qualities in characters to esteem most affectionately. Let us abhor that lukewarmness which never heaved a sigh over the dishonours done to God, and cares not how its brethren live or die. Let us abhor that selfishness and eagerness to be rich, which devote every moment to Mammon, and laugh at charitable efforts as the profusion of enthusiasm. Let us honour benevolence in its labours of love, and the zeal which strives to do all for the glory of God.

Rejoice that your zeal for God's honour, and your benevolence to men, are qualities in which He delights. He loves the faintest traces of His Son's image, and the feeblest movements of His Spirit, even the smell of His Son's garment. Let your zeal and love abound more and more, for in both you have much to learn, and much to acquire.

God delights in the good man's willingness to die at His command; in the piety which nothing can satisfy but His likeness; in the patience that waits for His call; and in the bene-

volence, which feels this as the strongest tie to earth, that it is a sphere for showing good-will to men. Why should you be so reluctant to lay down 'this vain life?' Like your Lord, you shall arise in glory. Your eyes shall open to admire, and your lips to praise Him. Your zeal shall be gratified with the adorations, and your benevolence with the happiness, of the just. And now, I trust, the resolution is formed by you, 'Earth and heaven shall be my place of service to my Redeemer; and time and eternity shall be devoted by me to Him.' 'While we live, let us live to the Lord,' who gives life and blesses it; when we die, let us die to the Lord, the conqueror of death; when we rise, let us rise to the Lord our resurrection; and when we are glorified, let it be that we may 'glorify Him with our bodies, and with our spirits, which are His.'

ADDRESS LXI.

Jesus wept.—JOHN xi. 35.

WHAT a memorable circumstance in the history of our Lord! With great propriety have those who divided the New Testament into verses made a single verse of this, that the reader may pause and wonder at the tenderness of the Saviour's compassion. On this verse the mourner loves to meditate, many a tear has fallen over it, and many a blessing has been invoked on that head and heart from which these melting symptoms of pity came. This view of our Saviour's tenderness is well adapted to encourage His timid and sorrowful disciples to approach to Him at His table, and to implore His mercy and grace; and it is in this ordinance that He delights to manifest the kindness and the power of His sympathy in healing the broken in heart, and in binding up their wounds.

These tears of Jesus proceeded from the genuine grief of a kind and melting heart. There are some who have tears at command, and who can weep bitterly when their hearts are very little affected; but that Jesus was deeply moved, is evident from His groaning in spirit, and it was mental emotion that filled His eyes with tears. The heart which no danger could intimidate was feelingly alive to the impressions of pity; and though He experienced more than any one ever did of that ungrateful and injurious treatment which has so often soured the generous and feeling breast, He beheld the miserable with unabated interest, and relieved them with undiminished liberality.

These tears were copious. This is plain from the remark

which was made by some of the spectators : ‘ Behold how He loved him.’ They saw in His tears an attachment to the dead uncommonly tender, and therefore it could not be a slight or feeble expression of sorrow. Joy shed few gleams over His countenance, and the Man of Sorrows was to be known by the tokens of grief. At the same time, we must not suppose that there was aught that was excessive, or any indication of outrageous passion in our Lord’s sorrow. It unfits Him for no part of His duty ; the heart that is throbbing with strong emotion is possessed in patience, and while His eyes run down with water, He waits for the salvation of God.

In this sorrow of our Lord there was no ostentation. Nothing is more disgusting than parade in grief ; but it must be remarked, that, to assume and to maintain the appearance of unconcern in the scene of mourning, may be hurtful and offensive to those whom our sympathy might soothe, is an indignity to the memory of the departed, and a contempt of those lessons of mortality which both wisdom and piety require that we should feel. It was necessary that our Lord’s grief should be manifested for the comfort of the mourners, and for the trial of the hearts of the spectators ; but beyond this He had no wish to exhibit His sorrow. The affectation and vain-glory which court applause for any quality whatever, were utter strangers to His meek and lowly mind.

How amiable was Jesus in this sorrow ! Philosophy delights to exhibit its sages, and war its heroes, as superior to all the softer passions, and as stern and unmoved amidst the agitation of others ; but the Gospel represents Him who is the wisdom of God and the power of God, as possessing all the gentler dispositions, and as bearing to the scene of sorrow a kind and melting heart. Such a character deserves to be loved in the highest degree, and the more it is studied the more amiable it appears.

But let your meditations be turned to the causes of these tears. He wept from friendship to Lazarus. The various and endearing expressions of this man’s regard crowded on His mind, and could not but deeply affect so grateful a heart. He thought of the agony through which Lazarus had passed, and of the pangs he had felt at not seeing Him ere he died. Such thoughts as these might pass through the mind of Lazarus in his illness : ‘ If Christ were here He would relieve me if it was for my good, and with Him by my side I could die in peace. My beloved sisters, it is His hand which I wish to close these eyes, and to His care I desire to commend you in my last hour.’ But Lazarus dies while the Comforter is far away ; and Jesus

felt that the face which used to meet Him with smiles was now pale and ghastly, that dark and dismal was the mansion where friendship spread His couch and prepared His table, and that the companion who leaned on His bosom now lay cold and senseless in his tomb.

Our Lord might weep also when He thought of the scenes to which Lazarus was to return. His resurrection would be a blessing to his sisters, but it would bring him back to a world of sorrow and danger, where the malice of his enemies would seek to destroy him, and where he must be subjected to many anxieties and fears. He knew that he had again to pass through the agonies of death, again to fight that dreadful battle in which human wisdom, skill, and power are of no avail. Such are often the agonies of death, that it is certainly a privilege to be called to undergo them but once; and if the resurrection which has been bestowed on some was a high distinction, it was no preservative from dying afterwards, that it might not produce in others envy and repining. We read of One only who rose to die no more, even that Saviour who is the resurrection and the life. Let the idle sophisters who condemn Christianity for not inculcating friendship, contemplate this moving sight, and they will be ashamed to advance an objection so groundless. Friendship will ever regard this history and these tears as sacred memorials of her power in the heart of Jesus.

Christians, you were once in a state far more dismal than that of Lazarus, for ye were dead in trespasses and in sins; but Jesus came to the spot where you were lying, and though you were loathsome with corruption, 'your time was a time of love, and He said unto you, Live.' He entered into covenant with you, and you became His, and that covenant you are now to renew.

Jesus also wept in sympathy with the friends of Lazarus. He knew the advantages which they had lost, and the pangs which they felt, and with their tears His fell. How soothing must these tears have been to them. He feels how solitary the dwelling will be to us which a brother's presence can no longer enliven, and how painful and perplexing our future lot must be, bereft of such a counsellor and friend. He knows the scenes of happiness which memory is recalling to embitter this separation, and the instances of neglect and unkindness which wounded sensibility is aggravating, and which cannot now be repaired. He can comfort us, and these tears assure us that He will do it, and they revive our drooping hearts. They had professions of sympathy from others in abundance, but no tears were balm to them but His.

But our Lord wept over the desolations of death. He was now going to a grave, and His mind went back to the period when by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and He beheld death passing in succession upon all, because all had sinned. If the serious and feeling mind contemplates with a sigh the ruins of ancient palaces, from which the noble and the mighty gave law to all around; if such a man cannot travel over the scenes where proud and wealthy cities once stood, without being depressed by the thought that the splendour of courts, and the throng of commerce, are now succeeded by the nakedness and the silence of desolation, the heart of our Lord must have bled at the view of the millions He had made and fashioned, and in whom wisdom and piety dwelt and operated, consuming in the grave.

Our Lord saw too, that, notwithstanding the conquest which He was to gain over death, it would continue its ravages till the time of the restitution of all things, and had therefore in His view all the painful separations it was yet to make; and I must add, and how agonizing must have been the sight, all the multitudes whom it was to cast into hell! He thought of the human beings to whom the offers of His grace would be addressed in vain, and who, in spite of all the methods which would be employed to turn them to God, should be driven away in their wickedness. He beheld the ravages of the king of terrors, not with fear, but with sorrow: His eye at that moment surveyed every death-bed, and entered into every grave; and the tears which fell from it were those of generous pity over the ruins of that nature which He had assumed, and to which, amidst all its degradation, His soul cleaved, and over the perdition of those who would not come to Him that they might have life.

And now, my brethren, let me ask, into what frame of mind have these contemplations brought you? Are your hearts melting, and your tears mingling with His; and are you now following Him from the grave where He wept, that you might be soothed by His sympathy; to the cross where He died, that you might be washed in His blood; that you may know Him in the virtues of His character, and in the fellowship of His sufferings? Then over you the Saviour will rejoice, and His comforts will delight your souls.

Christians, you feel, I trust, the claims which the Saviour in tears has to your admiration and love. Our hearts esteem the man whom we behold weeping with the mourner, especially if we know him to be one of a great and beneficent character;

and shall we not regard Him with every sentiment of wonder and affection, who, though He was in the form of God, entered so deeply into the woes of suffering humanity? Tenderness of heart is always amiable, but it appears especially so in one whose situation is superior to that of the sufferer, or who has severer woes of his own to bear. And when the Lord from heaven, when the victim of the curse weeps for us, we must feel disposed to say, 'How precious is Thy grace! I am ashamed of the coldness of my love, nor can I think of the selfish spirit of the world, or of the enmity of the carnal mind against Thee, without indignation. Here is a heart that would love Thee in the highest degree, and which Thy tears and Thy sufferings have won.' Thy heart is accepted; but while His condescension should fill thee with grateful wonder, remember the solemn responsibility under which this surrender has brought thee. The heart, thus devoted, can never be withdrawn from Him without involving thee in the guilt of the basest treachery. O keep it 'with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life or of death.'

Trust in your Saviour's compassion in the hour of sorrow. You cannot accost Him in the same form, nor receive His sympathy in the same way with the friends of Lazarus; but we know that in all our affliction He is afflicted. Let not the assurance of His sympathy be treated as a vain delusion. It is no idle tale which I hear from the lips of that orphan, 'I went to weep at my father's grave, and I looked for some to pity me, but there was none, and for comforters, but I found none. All was motionless around me save the waving of the grass, and all was silence save the howling of the wind. No father's voice spoke to me from the dust: but I heard a voice, and by its kindness and its power I knew it to be that of Jesus. It promised me the pity, the love, and the care of an Almighty Friend; it inspired me with fortitude, and animated me with hope. I felt His arm supporting me, I sunk into His bosom, and He soothed my heart to rest.'

Cultivate sympathy, and be ready to manifest it to the children of sorrow. It is painful to think how little of the Saviour's spirit is to be seen among the visitants of the house of mourning. The bereaved parents, the helpless orphan, and the broken-hearted widow, have too often been surrounded by those who had nought of sorrow but its garb, and have listened in vain for one sentiment of piety, or one counsel of religious comfort. Foolish talk and political details too often occupy the place which should be devoted to the words of eternal life. Let us do everything in our power to correct such flagrant

improprieties, and labour to support the weak, and to comfort the wounded mind. How soothing to the sufferer is the language and the manner which says, 'I cannot remove your pains, but I will make them as easy as I can by the ministrations of love. I cannot bring back the friends you have lost, but I will be a friend in their place.' Were the spirit of sympathy prevalent in a church, it would resemble the sensitive plant, every twig of which vibrates if a leaf is touched; or the natural body, where all the members suffer if one is injured. Sympathy with others will prevent your brooding too painfully over your own troubles; and to you it must be the most powerful of all motives to this duty, that He who hath taught you contentment by His privations, zeal by His labours, and devotion by His prayers, hath called you to weep with the mourner by His tears.

What a happy day to your Lord will that of the resurrection be! Then the friends whom He gave up to death with a sigh will rise to die no more, and those with whom He wept will be more happy than ever they were sad. Then the bodies of good men will appear more comely than our nature did even in the period of innocence, and the crown of life shall be placed on the head which once lay so low in the dust. They shall be engaged in the noblest services, and called to the best enjoyments.

How delightful to Jesus will be the astonishment and rapture with which pious friends will meet each other, and the pleasure with which they will listen to His assurance from His throne, that their union shall be eternal! In the very spot where friends parted they shall meet again in joy more sweet than the sorrow was bitter, and the place of weeping shall be the scene of exultation. Let your decaying hopes feel the reviving influence of your Lord's promise; and while nature mourns over the disorder and the desolation which are spread over the fairest of her works, rejoice in hope of the new heavens and the new earth, where righteousness, harmony, and love, shall flourish for ever.

ADDRESS LXII.

Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.—JOHN xii. 3.

THIS act of Mary's was a beautiful expression of the most estimable qualities. It was on this account that our Saviour permitted it, and valued it so highly.

It was a proof of her gratitude. There are few who are not impressed by a distinguished act of kindness when it is performed. We think, in the first movements of our feelings, that it is impossible we can ever forget it; but, ah! how soon do these emotions subside! Other impressions occupy the mind, and the resolutions which we had formed, as to the mode of testifying our gratitude, pass away never to be thought of more. Such was not the conduct of Mary. Some time had now elapsed since the resurrection of Lazarus, but the mercy is as precious in her view as it was in the hour of re-union with her brother; and to show that the Saviour's kindness had not been forgotten, and never should, she pours on His head this costly ointment. I cannot do too much to refresh Him, who gave to me such effectual consolation; and my best ointment shall drop for Him, whose tears flowed for me.

Christians, have not you as strong reasons for expressing your gratitude? Have no friends been restored to you from the grasp of death? Think what you felt at the moment when the first symptoms of recovery were visible, and remember your emotions, as you knelt by the bedside where the friend of your soul was lying easy and tranquil, after his violent struggles. Have you no friends, whose souls Jesus hath delivered from spiritual death? Has not He brought up your own souls from corruption? Express to Him, therefore, the gratitude which becomes you, and let Him read in your hearts what He hears from your lips.

It was a proof of Mary's love. This ointment was costly, but she grudged it not; nor was it a small quantity that she gave, but such a measure of it as filled the whole house with its odour. In the warm climates of the East, the anointing of the head was very agreeable and exhilarating; but not deeming it enough to pour it on our Lord's head, she spread it over His feet. Her affection suggested to her how she might minister to our Lord's comfort. Instead of saying, My sister neither wishes nor needs any aid in ministering to His comfort; what therefore can I do? her liberal heart prompted her to devote this ointment, which was her own exclusive property, to the refreshment of Him who had anointed her with the oil of gladness. The man who loves Christ will not fold his hands in indolence, and say every sphere of activity is occupied, but will be eager to find out a place where he may spend and be spent for his Lord. It showed the affection of Mary, that she wiped Christ's feet with her hair. Towels would not have been wanting for this purpose, had she sought them, or chosen to use them. The hair, in the East, was a principal object of attention in female

decoration, but she delighted to employ its tresses in this office of respect to the Saviour.

Ye cannot, indeed, thus show your love to the body of Jesus. But if, from affection to Him, you drop balm into the wounds of affliction; if you moisten the parched lips of sickness, and wipe the dews of death from the brow; if you apply what will restore warmth to the feet which disease or infirmity has chilled, and give a cup of cold water to a disciple in his Master's name, these acts of charity are done to Jesus. At the communion table, let love pour its blessings on that head, 'which is as the most fine gold;' let it give vent to the admiration which His excellence and goodness demand; let it delight in Him as its chief joy, and lay its best services at His feet; and let the devotion of the heart ascend to Him like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense: and may the savour of His good ointment exhilarate your hearts.

'All thy garments smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces whereby they have made thee glad.'

Mary's anointing our Lord was an indication of self-denial. This ointment had either been purchased by her, or presented to her, for her own use. Such a quantity of it would have contributed for some time to the refreshment and the decoration of her person. Without it she would appear unlike the companions with whom she associated. How easily could she have procured with it some showy pieces of apparel! But, regardless of all such considerations, she joyfully devotes it to the honour of her Lord. Can I use exhilarating ointment, while my Lord is weary and exhausted? Let my companions solicit admiration, by their brodered hair; mine shall wipe the feet that bring good tidings, and which came so far to raise my brother from the dust. Christians, ye too must deny yourselves. How idle are the pretexts by which many try to excuse their want of liberality in the cause of piety and humanity. They say they have nothing to spare. Their tables are loaded with luxuries, and the retrenchment even of one dish might furnish them with a fund for charity, and leave them enough, and more than enough, to supply the wants of nature. A little of that wine which flows so amply at the feasts of many, might support the hearts that are sinking in weakness; and one of their changes of raiment might cover the shivering pauper, whose rags yield him a sorry defence from the winter's cold. Too many, in the lower ranks of life, lay out in the purchase of apparel, far above their station, the money which might adorn them with the lustre of beneficence. Recollect, O Christian! how much thy Lord

sacrificed for thee, and thou wilt surely feel disposed to every act of self-denial for which He calls. How will the dying man look back on the indulgence with which he gratified himself, while he did nothing for the Redeemer. Disease will make that head ache, which was so often anointed with the chief ointments; and despair shall harrow up that soul, which the voluptuary never withheld from any joy.

It was, in fine, an indication of Mary's zeal. Her temper was timid and modest; and nothing but zeal for our Lord's honour could have led her, in the presence of such a number of persons, to show Him this mark of respect. She knew not how the disciples would relish it. Perhaps her sister might blame her for idle profusion. She knew the rage of the rulers against all the followers of Jesus; yet she openly honours Him, whom His enemies delighted to degrade. And have we no zeal for the Lord? Has none been kindled at His altar? Are not our hearts 'burning within us?' Let us exert ourselves for Christ's honour, even though it should expose us to the censure of our dearest friends. What is the voice of upbraiding from those we love, to the frown of our Redeemer? Men may represent your zeal as the operation of ill-nature, spiritual pride, or ostentation; they may extol the complaisance which allows every man to indulge his own humour, and the indifference which 'seeks none of the things that are Jesus Christ's,' as tempers mild and candid; but they are indications of the lukewarmness which God abhors. 'Whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God.' Carry with you the zeal of God's house to every scene, and to every employment.

After Jacob's vision of the ladder, he took the stone which he had set for his pillow, and put it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. This was a rite used of old, for consecrating anything for a religious purpose. Raise, at the communion table, your pillar of memorial, saying, 'Hitherto hath the Lord helped;' and pour on it the oil of your gratitude and praise, for the privilege you have now enjoyed, for God's accepting your sacrifice, and remembering your gifts. How pleasing will it be to hear from the lips of your God, many days hence, such language as this, 'I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst the vow unto Me!' Jesus will keep in record the pledges of thine affection and homage, and reward thee with that unction from the Holy One, which shall teach thee all things, fill thee with joy unspeakable and full of glory, animate thy obedience with heavenly ardour, and prepare thee for the crown that fadeth not away.

ADDRESS LXIII.

He riseth from supper, and laid aside His garments; and took a towel, and girded Himself. After that He poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded.—JOHN xiii. 4, 5.

WHO can look at the Lord Jesus while thus employed, without the strongest emotions of wonder and love! How admirably are majesty and tenderness combined in His looks and manner; a majesty that guarded His condescension from abuse; a tenderness which overpowered the hearts of His disciples! I have seen, O Jesus! penitence washing Thy feet with its tears, and grateful affection anointing them with ointment; but here I behold Thee not ministered unto, but ministering; and in the act of a servant, as well as in his form.

The washing of the feet was a rite of hospitality common in the East; and from the climate, as well as from the sandals worn there, was peculiarly necessary and agreeable. But our Lord had more in view than to promote the temporary comfort of His disciples; and meant to exhibit to us, in this act, the spirit that was His glory.

Behold, in Christ's washing the feet of His disciples, the meekness and lowliness of His heart! He will disdain no office that is necessary for the consolation and the happiness of His followers. He will visit the meanest dwelling, bless the scantiest fare, and accept the smallest offering, and the most imperfect services, of the sincerely pious. He will not suffer the tender plant to droop and die for want of moisture. He will accept the melody of the bruised reed, and listen to the praises of babes and sucklings. He will support infirmity in its trembling steps, and wipe the tear from the failing eye. He will go with virtuous poverty to its long home, and maintain its humble memorial.

What displays of condescension and mercy dost thou require at His table? State them, and He will rise to grant thee thine heart's wish, and to fulfil all thy counsels. Is thy heart quaking with terror? He approaches thee to gird thee with strength. Instead of the fears of nature or of guilt, He will fill thee with the peace of God. Art thou blushing at the consciousness of thy unworthiness? He comes to thee with the blood of sprinkling in His hands, and with the voice of approbation on His lips. Is thy heart sore broken? Behold He comes with the balm of Gilead to drop on its wounds.

But Christ's washing the feet of His disciples was intended to lead our views to an act of grace and love more astonishing still—'His washing us from our sins in His own blood.' The washing of the feet was an act commonly performed by the lowest of the servants; but the death of the cross was the punishment allotted to the vilest criminals. So dreadful was the defilement which we had contracted, that nothing could purify us but the blood of the cross. Look, Christians, to Calvary, and behold the fountain opened! The stream of water and blood rushes forth, and for you it flows. Hear, in your Saviour's words, the confirmation of this truth: 'This cup is the New Testament in My blood, shed for remission of sins unto many; drink ye all of it;' and as you do so, may this be the delightful persuasion of your hearts: 'The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin.' May this be the testimony borne to you by Him that looks on the heart, 'Ye are washed, ye are justified, ye are sanctified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.' I have led you to the blood of sprinkling: and while solemn silence reigns in this place, you are left to listen to the better things which it speaks, and to an application of it by faith, for promoting the sanctification and the joy of your hearts.

You have felt, I trust, the virtue of this precious blood; but I must remind you, that there must be a continued application of it, till neither spot, nor wrinkle, nor any such thing, remain on you.

'Take heed, lest ye be again entangled in the pollutions of the world, and overcome.' The indulgence which fascinates your senses, may prove a snare to your souls; and the object which invites your grasp by its fair and smiling appearance, may leave behind it a foul stain. Think how you will stand before your Redeemer, with spots on those garments which He made white in His blood; and with corruption raging in that heart which He died to win to goodness.

O ye, whose hearts are still sinking under the consciousness of guilt, listen to the language of your God and Saviour: 'Come now, let us reason together: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as the snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as the wool.'

But Christ washed the feet of His disciples, to teach them condescension and kindness to each other. While some degrade this scene by an imitation of its letter, with all the parade of a childish superstition; and while princely pomp and ecclesiastic domination have affected to copy it, remem-

ber that this is its spirit, 'Mind not high things; but condescend to them of low degree;' and that this is the best mode of following it, 'Distributing to the necessity of saints.' Ye who have the spirit of wisdom, comfort ye the feeble-minded, and admonish the inexperienced. Ye who have of this world's goods, the poor pining in their naked dwellings demand your visits and your alms. The friendless orphan claims your notice, and the sick your sympathizing care. The vicious, haunted by remorse, and sinking in despair, call on you by their groans to lead them to Him, whose glory it is that He can save the chief of sinners. The flower withering on the waste may be destined for paradise, and through eternity will reward the pity that watered it, by decking your inheritance with its blossoms. How delightful are those feelings of heart which attend the performance of acts of condescension and kindness! And how amiable is that superiority in station or talent which humility and charity unite their influence in adorning! It is like the sun descending in softened splendour, and calling forth the dew to refresh the parched fields. What blessings are invoked on the great as they go forth to relieve the wretched; and of all the exertions of superior intelligence, there are none to which the heart does such homage, as to its efforts to make the simple wise.

Rejoice, Christians, that the ministrations of Jesus to the happiness of His people shall not be confined to this world. 'Blessed are those servants, whom their Lord, when He comes, shall find watching; He shall gird Himself, and make them sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.' He will rise from the throne to replace the crown which had been laid at His feet. To the humble soul which sits down in the lowest room, as if the lowest was too exalted for it, He will say, Friend, go up higher: and for the labours of beneficence He will reward you bountifully. In the faith of this, be zealous in good works; abound in hope; and be clothed with humility. 'Now, unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy; to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.'

ADDRESS LXIV.

Now is the Son of Man glorified.—JOHN xiii. 31.

THESE words were spoken by Jesus in reference to His last sufferings. His enemies thought that His crucifixion would

fix a brand of infamy on His name and cause, which would remain on them for ever. They gave Him thorns for His crown, a reed for His sceptre, thieves for His associates, and a cross for His throne; yet with all these in His view, Jesus could say, 'The hour is come in which the Son of Man shall be glorified.' He saw that, amidst these thorns, laurels would spring up; that this reed, like the rod of Aaron, would bring forth buds and blossoms; that, of these associates, one would be a trophy of His mercy; and that His cross would be the glory of earth, and the song of heaven.

The Son of Man was glorified in His sufferings, by the wonders wrought by His Father in testimony to His innocence and dignity. The rending vail declared that He was now subverting the ceremonial dispensation; the darkened sun, that He was now overcoming the world; the quaking earth, that the systems of idolatry and superstition would fall in pieces before Him; and the opening graves, that He was now swallowing up death in victory. Christians, have ye the enlightened and liberal spirit of the grace and truth that came by Jesus Christ? Have you repelled the temptations by which the world tried to seduce you from your duty? Have you, in our Lord's conquest of death, found a security from its terrors, and a confidence which has enabled the feebleness of nature to welcome its approach? The Lord hath done great things in you.

The Son of Man was glorified in His sufferings, by the displays of Divine perfection which He gave in them. The touch which healed the ear of Malchus; the voice which made the armed band fall speechless to the ground; the look which melted Peter into the deepest contrition; and the grasp that plucked the penitent thief as a brand from the burning, were displays of power and grace which proclaimed that the sufferer was more than human. Oh that He would bless me with such a touch of His hand as would heal the plagues of my heart! May I hear from His lips the voice that will make me repent in dust and in ashes! May He give me such a look as will reclaim me from all my backslidings; and such a grasp as will draw me from everything which would detain me from Himself!

The Son of Man was glorified in His sufferings, by the wonders which He then accomplished. Let the law declare how He magnified it; the powers of darkness, how He triumphed over them; sin, how it was expiated; heaven, how it was purchased; and the gates of hell, how they were broken in pieces. Was the law honoured when it was proclaimed by the voice of God amidst the tempests of Sinai? Much more was it glori-

fied when all its demands were fulfilled amidst the darkness of Calvary. Behold, O Christians, the everlasting doors open for you! Behold Satan falling like lightning from heaven, and rejoice that his fall was the rise of man.

The Son of Man was glorified in His sufferings, by the graces and virtues which He then displayed in their fullest excellence. The generosity which prayed for His murderers, the patience that suffered excruciating torture in silence, the faith that cleaved to an angry God, the pity that looked from a cross on His mother's sorrows, and the love that died for enemies, are some of the virtues of the dying Saviour; and in what life or death can they find a parallel? Like the Saviour in whom they shine, they have no equal. Hath that generosity steeled you against the dictates of the resentful passions? Hath that patience subdued the pride and the discontent of your hearts? Hath that faith taught you to bless your Father when He scourges you? Hath that pity led you to weep with the wretched, and, amidst all your own difficulties, carefully to shelter a parent's grey hairs from the rude blast? Hath that love inclined you to do good to those who have injured you? Is it your wish that you may be made conformable to Christ's death? Is the world crucified to you by the cross? Then the spirit of the cross rests upon you.

Never be ashamed of the sufferings of your Lord. 'To the Jews, the cross was a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness.' Many have considered it as a blemish on the system of Christianity, which it was the office of prudence to conceal, or the duty of truth to expose. But of all its parts, this is the one on which you gaze with the most glowing admiration. While infidel philosophy turns away from it with disgust, or, as if He had not been sufficiently dishonoured, directs its sarcasms at the Sufferer, angels look at the scene with holy wonder; and extol the crucified One in all their songs; and nature and reason, in their noblest movements, bore Him this testimony by the lips of the centurion, 'Truly this was the Son of God.'

In the afflictions which you labour under, God will bring you to honour. How wonderful is the notice which God Himself takes of suffering saints! You would deem your affliction honoured were kings to inquire into your situation, to watch in your sick chamber, and to mingle their sorrow with yours. Yet this would be as nothing when compared with God's putting your tears into His bottle; with Christ's being touched with the feeling of your infirmities; and with the Holy Spirit's abiding with you for ever.

Let the exercise of the Christian graces glorify God, and reflect credit on yourselves in suffering. 'Let patience have its perfect work in you, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing;' and let it appear in submission to God, and in gentleness to man. Let faith trust in God's goodness, when His words are bitter, and His strokes are heavy; and let love welcome the rod that is wielded by the hand of mercy. Let generosity not only suppress harsh reflections against those who have been the instruments of your calamity, but dictate fervent prayers for their forgiveness and salvation. Let repentance acknowledge the justice of your Father's corrections, and let gratitude bless Him, that His chastenings are so beneficial in their influence, and that the blow is directed, not at all your comforts, but only at a few. Glorify God in your sorrows. As the wind opening the rose-buds to beauty and fragrance, so is affliction to the good; not like the blast that strews them on the ground.

Christians, our Lord's glory in His sufferings was the pledge of a brighter glory afterwards, when He rose in power, ascended in triumph, and 'sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.' And 'your light afflictions, which are but for a moment, shall work for you a far more exceeding and an eternal weight of glory.' 'The trial of your grace, like gold brightened in the furnace, shall be found to praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.' Dust is now sprinkled on your heads, but the Lord shall place on them the crown of righteousness; and the honours of your Father's house shall more than compensate all the humiliations of this strange land: 'When Christ, who is your life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.'

ADDRESS LXV.

Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

JOHN xiv. 27.

In these words, the affectionate solicitude of our Saviour for the happiness of His disciples is most beautifully expressed. His dying gift, and His parting counsel, have been the consolation of Christians in every age, and often have they rendered the communion service a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. And when you are now assembled to commemorate His death, may He come and stand in the midst of you,

and say, 'Peace be unto you.' May He breathe on you, and say, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost.'

Meditate, Christians, on the nature and extent of that peace with which the Lord Jesus blessed His followers. He left His disciples in peace with God. He was now about to make peace by the blood of His cross, and by the power of His grace He had brought His disciples into a state of reconciliation with God, taught them to look up with confidence to Him as a Father, and left them entrusted to His care, and assured of His pity. And you have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and in His friendship you have a defence and a felicity which bids defiance to all the malice of earth and hell. Instead of trembling at His flaming sword, His vindictive frown, and His destructive curse, you touch His golden sceptre, feel the sense of His favour, and rejoice in His promises of mercy.

Jesus gave to His disciples peace of conscience. He was now about to offer up that sacrifice which should furnish them with a reply to all its charges, and open to them a refuge in all its alarms, and had directed them to that purity of heart, and that rectitude of conduct, which should secure to them its joyful testimony. And in every age His blood purifies the conscience from dead works, and His grace forms to that excellence the fruit of which is quietness and assurance for ever. He inspires such a hope of mercy and acceptance at the bar of the Judge of all, as fortifies the mind against all the surmises and censures of wickedness and malignity.

He left them also in harmony with each other. With them He had maintained the peace of charity and kind affection in spite of all their provocations, and had taught them the meekness that is slow to wrath, the gentleness which conciliates prejudice, and the love which endureth all things. And by the wisdom which comes from above, which is pure and peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, and full of mercy, He gives one heart to His followers in all ages, and makes the society of His genuine disciples, existing amidst the contentions and strifes of the world, to exhibit to the view a quiet retreat in a howling wilderness.

But Jesus left to His disciples also that comfort of the Spirit which had cheered His mind under every afflicting incident, and under every dark anticipation; and the joy of the Holy Ghost is His gift to you. There are some whose tempers are so selfish and malignant, that their pleasures are marred if others have a part in them; and then only are they satisfied when they partake of their enjoyments amid the terrors and the misery of their dependents; but the liberal heart of the Lord

Jesus deviseth liberal things. He has no glory too high, and no joy too blissful, for His people to share. It is His wish that His joy may remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

Meditate on the value of the blessing of peace, whose importance is attested by the eternal counsels of Jehovah respecting it, by the agonies of the Man of Sorrows which obtained it for you, by the wishes of the best on earth, and by the intercession of the Redeemer in heaven. And how delightful is it to consider it as the peace of the Saviour, and with the utmost propriety does He call it His, since it is the purchase of His blood, the fruit of His Spirit, the result of His lessons, the answer of His prayers, and the joy of His heart.

It is an interesting circumstance in this passage, that the language of our Lord conveys the idea of a testamentary grant, and this suggests that our Saviour's feelings in the view of death were all directed to the interest and the happiness of His people. It is by their latter will that men express their affection to those who survive them, and it is by the value of their gift in proportion to their circumstances, that a judgment is formed of the strength of their regard. And in this last gift of our Lord, you see that He loved His own to the end, and that He lived and died with you on His heart.

This circumstance suggests also that this peace is peculiar. It is to those connected with him by blood or friendship that a testator bequeaths his possessions, and those who receive this peace are such as are animated by Christ's spirit. It is not merely to the eminent in grace or utility that it is left, but to those who are feeble, helpless, and depressed like the bruised reed. The meek shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace; and as this peace is ample in itself, it is not limited to a few as its possessors, for 'He creates the fruit of the lips; peace, peace to him that is afar off, and to him that is nigh,' and 'as many as walk according to His law, peace shall be on them and mercy, and on all the Israel of God.' I may also mention that this language intimates that this peace is unmerited. Testamentary gifts are generally mere expressions of regard, and are seldom the return of favours or services received from the legatees; and you feel that you had no claim to this peace. Instead of the sweet sunshine and the soft dew, you deserved the horrible tempest of snares, fire and brimstone. Do you delight to consider this peace as the result of grace, and is this a reflection which increases your present enjoyment in it, and which will heighten even your bliss above, that it is bestowed on one who deserved nought but 'indignation and wrath, tribu-

lation and anguish?' This is a spirit well adapted to the place you now occupy, and none else becomes you.

And as a testament is of no force while the testator liveth, for he hath power to revoke, or to modify it as he pleases, but after his death it is unalterable; our Lord by His death ratified the everlasting covenant, and the sacramental cup is the pledge of this bequest sealed in His blood. In this light you are now called upon to regard it, and to rejoice in it as the security of your happiness, the life of your peace, and the bulwark of your safety.

Meditate, Christians, on the excellences of this peace. The peace of the world rests on no basis but the expectations of a presumptuous hope, the false conclusions of ignorance and error, the suggestions of flattery, and the deceits of Satan; but this peace is founded on the merits of Christ's atonement, and on the sufficiency of His grace. The peace which the world gives lies in the gratification of the lower principles of our nature, which never impart the delight yielded by those of a nobler description; but the peace of religion results from the exercise of the mind that was in Christ, and hath in it much of the pleasure which flows at the right hand of God. The peace of the world is often a mere show. Those who have been admired for their gaiety, and whose bursts of mirth have made the inconsiderate imagine that they were perfectly happy, have acknowledged that even in these moments they could have exchanged situations with the poorest of human beings who was reconciled to God; but the peace of the good man rules in his heart, and in the severest distress shows itself in the meekness and serenity of the whole deportment. The peace of the world lulls men into a forgetfulness of God, and a disregard of their duties, and so enfeebles the mind, that in the hour of calamity it is distracted with fear; but this peace animates to every holy exercise, and so fortifies the heart, that it can sustain the evils of persecution and the terrors of death. And the peace of the world is transient. The very passions which give them enjoyment make them miserable! When their head presses their pillow they feel its thorns; but the peace of the Gospel is sure, for all the virtue of the cross, and all the kindness of His heart, are pledged for its permanence, who died for your salvation, and who lives for your happiness.

It will be gratifying and useful to you to reflect how your Saviour's peace differs from that of the world as to the mode of its bestowal. The peace of the world is given merely in expression or wish. Happiness it is not in their power to bestow

It is only the God who formed the heart who can make it happy. But Christ is the God of peace, and when He speaks it is done. The peace of the world is often spoken insincerely. The glowing language and the kind looks of friendship are too often the instruments of deceit, but Christ is full of grace and truth, and He is the faithful witness. The world speaks peace from selfish views, and in expectation of a return superior, or at least equal to what it promises; but the happiness of His people is the Saviour's aim. The world speaks peace to those to whom God says there is none, and assures its votaries of safety in courses against which the threatenings of God denounce His vengeance; but Jesus speaks peace only to the humble, the penitent, and the holy.

Be grateful to the Saviour for this peace, and be solicitous that all your friends and connections may possess it; and if, when you die, you leave them in possession of it, they are happy though it may be their lot to be poor; and without this, all the distinctions of wealth and grandeur will be but splendid wretchedness. Beware of disturbing the harmony of civil or religious society by the workings of pride, anger, or envy. 'Follow after the things which make for peace, and things whereby one may edify another.' And 'let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.' Let no anticipation of evil trouble you. Let them dread the approach of the tempest, or sink under its fury, who have no hiding-place from the wind, and no covert from the storm; but it would be most unreasonable in those to do so to whom God hath said, that 'He will hide them in His pavilion in the day of evil, and set their feet upon a rock.' Your fears are vain as the terrors with which superstition haunts the minds of children, and the calamities which you dread are like the spectres which visit their fancy, the creatures of imagination, and incapable of doing you any real injury. Uneasiness and fear will dishonour your Lord, by exhibiting His kind assurance as delusive, or as insufficient to yield you tranquillity, and it may discourage those who are favourably disposed to what is pious. These anxieties and forebodings will impede your progress in holiness, and keep you in wretched and degrading bondage. 'Be careful then for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God; and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.' When you are afflicted and tossed with tempests, and not comforted, instead of fruitless repining and paralyzing fear, implore His help, and He will arise and rebuke the winds, and say to the sea, 'Peace, be still,

and there will be a great calm.' The winds and the sea in the world of nature are subject to His control, and so are also the passions of the heart and the tumults of the people. Now, the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always, and by all means. Amen.

ADDRESS LXVI.

I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do.—JOHN xvii. 4.

WAS this the language of vain boasting? Was it the language of one whose hope might be found to be presumptuous, or of one to whom the issue of His sufferings could be in any way uncertain? No. Jesus knew the end from the beginning. He was conscious that His task, arduous as it was, was not beyond His strength, and He speaks of the fulfilment of the great objects of His mission as past, because in a few hours they would be completely gained.

Jesus glorified God upon the earth. Angels glorify God in heaven, and there they bow in reverential adoration, and sing in cheerful praise; but the Son of Man glorified God on earth, where the human race had dishonoured Him. Where man had trampled on God's law, there Jesus established and magnified it; and where we had defaced His image, there Christ shone as the brightness of His glory. In His doctrines He exhibited the Divine character, perfections, and law, in the purest and most striking manner, in opposition to the false and degrading representations of carnality and superstition. In His miracles, the hand of God was seen in its power, and His heart in its pity. In His example, the moral excellences of Jehovah were beheld shedding a lustre on poverty, confounding the presumption, and repelling the slanders, of His self-righteous opponents; and in His death, Divine justice received that which it would have sought in vain in the abodes of darkness—a complete satisfaction to all its demands. Here love blazes forth with a splendour never shown before. Imagination, contemplating this scene, talks of the inscriptions which she sees on the cross; but this is one which the pious mind ever marks there, one written on the heart of the beloved disciple, one consisting but of three words, but the import of which eternity only can disclose—'God is love.' The holiness of God was glorified in the purity of the victim, 'a Lamb without spot and blemish, in the finishing of transgression, and the bringing in

of everlasting righteousness.' The faithfulness of God approaches the cross, and bears this testimony, that 'not one prediction hath failed;' while the manifold wisdom of God is seen in the harmony of mercy and truth, in uniting a nature capable of sufferings with one which could render these fully meritorious, and in confounding the devices of the devil, and turning the craft of this world and the subtilty of hell into foolishness. The thunders of His power heard on Calvary, who can understand?

But what work was it that our Lord finished? It was the work of obedience to the precepts, and of satisfaction to the penalty of the law. It became Him to fulfil all righteousness; and no demand of the law can you conceive which was not answered in His life, and no curse is there denounced against the objects of His mercy which was not quenched in His blood. The cloud charged with the lightnings and thunders of Sinai hung over Calvary, and on Him the tempest burst. It continued to rage till it was announced from the excellent glory that His work was accepted. This expression of His Father's approbation was the signal of His release. That shout which proceeded from the cross, 'It is finished,' was echoed back from the throne of the Eternal. It hath sounded in the testimony of the Gospel, and in the songs of Zion, from age to age. Behold the seal of these words before you! These symbols of bread and wine are tokens of the completion of redemption. Christians, I call on you to mark salvation accomplished in the breaking of His body, and those that are sanctified, perfected for ever in the shedding of His blood. Ye do not commemorate the Saviour's promise to redeem you, or His commencement of that work merely, but its glorious and happy termination.

Reflect, Christians, how cheerfully your Lord finished this great work. Not one moment was it intermitted. 'It was His meat to do the will of Him that sent Him, and to finish His work.' 'He rejoiced like a strong man to run His race.' He finished it alone. 'I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with Me.' He was so far from soliciting any to be fellow-workers with Him, that He checked even the friendly sympathy which was mingling its sorrows with His, saying, 'Weep not for Me, but for yourselves.'

He finished it in such a manner, that not a single flaw has been discovered in it; and so triumphantly, that the agonizing body uttered the shout of victory, to the astonishment of the spectators, and to the shame and terror of His invisible opponents.

He finished it in the precise manner, and at the very moment,

which infinite wisdom had appointed. And with what joy did not our Redeemer contemplate its close? A joy pure and ardent; for it arose from a love to God and to man, which no heart ever felt, or could feel, like His.

Do you ask for evidence that Christ hath finished His work? Behold it in yonder empty grave, in yonder ascending chariot, and in yonder opening heavens! See it in the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God, and in the blessings He dispenses there; and hear it in the praises of the world of glory. Ye have felt it, and may you feel it more and more in redemption applied to your souls.

Now, Christians, I trust the song of angels hath been yours: that song which came down from the air to this earth, has now, I trust, gone up from this scene, that table, and your hearts, to heaven. 'Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, goodwill to men.' This song shall be heard from the uttermost ends of the world, and from the new heavens and the new earth, when this universe in which we dwell shall be burnt up.

Be zealous for the glory of God. 'Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God.' Glorify Him by the love of the heart, the praise of the tongue, and the obedience of the life; by gratitude, sobriety, and contentment at your meals; by patience and submission under your sorrows; by devotion in the temple, and purity in the world. Consider that in this life only can you glorify Him upon earth. Now you are called on to honour God where your Saviour glorified Him. It is here only that zeal can rise up against evil-doers; that pity can instruct those who are perishing for lack of knowledge; that sympathy can weep with the afflicted, or charity deal its bread to the hungry. It is here only that public spirit can exert itself for the good of society; that piety can labour for the advancement of Christ's kingdom; and that generosity can overcome evil with good.

Let me ask you how far you have advanced in the task which the Apostle thus describes, 'Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do of His good pleasure.' You are saying, 'Alas! my work is little more than begun.' Let the contemplation of Christ's diligence stimulate your ardour; and, 'forgetting the things that are behind, press forward to the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.' Endeavour to improve every day in the command of your tempers, in the sanctification of your thoughts, in the piety of your conversation, in spirituality of mind in the business of life, and in the graces which bless a household. 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with

thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest.' And when death comes, you will lay your head on your pillow, as Paul laid his on the block, and utter his dying song. Mark how he copies the language of his Lord. Saints love to use Christ's words, as far as they are adapted to their circumstances. 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me at that day; and not to me only, but to all them also that love His appearing.'

ADDRESS LXVII.

Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe.
And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!—JOHN xix. 5.

It is seldom that the dying criminal is made the object of derision, or that the execution of the sentence of the law has been associated with aught that is ludicrous. The dignity of justice would be degraded by such low arts, and feelings excited in the spectators directly opposite to those of compassion for the sufferer and horror at his crime. But in our Lord's last sufferings He was subjected to various insults. Unawed by the mild majesty of His look, and regardless of the powerful evidence of His innocence, they heaped upon Him every indignity which their insolence and barbarity could suggest. Among other insults, they platted a crown of thorns, and placed it on His head, and put on Him a purple robe. This was done in impious derision of His claims to royalty, and thus was He insulted whom God had set King on His holy hill of Zion, and to whom every knee should bow. The large thorns in this crown pierced our Lord's temples, and were driven deeper into His flesh by the blows with which they smote Him; yet neither indignity nor pain excited the least impatience, or produced a single complaint. There are some to whom insult is more intolerable than injury; and it is so to those who have been accustomed to marks of respect, and who are conscious that they deserve different treatment; but though our Lord had received the homage of angels, and was entitled to the highest estimation of mortals, yet did He bear their scorn in silence, for the magnanimity which endured the cross could despise the shame.

It was a part of the curse denounced against man after the Fall, 'Cursed is the ground for thy sake: thorns also and

thistles shall it bring forth to thee ;' and His head is pierced with thorns, who is made a curse for us to redeem us from the curse of the law. This indignity and pain our Lord endured, because the crown had fallen from our heads which the Creator had placed on it, and because the robe of innocence was rent in pieces in which He had arrayed us. Bright was that crown, and fair was that robe : there was nought in paradise which could equal them in splendour and beauty ; yet, by one act of dreadful infatuation, they were madly thrown away, and the lord of the work of God's hands became the slave of sin, and the object of the curse.

Jesus wore this crown and this robe to expiate the guilt of our rebellion against God, and that He might win your affectionate homage, and purchase for you the garments of salvation and the crown of glory. He might have left you to the shame and the misery which were the consequence of your yielding to the suggestions of the devil, and reserved his favours for angels who never offended Him ; but He gloried to repair the breaches of many generations, and to save those who were children of wrath. It was thus that He obtained for you the wedding garment you now wear, and the crown of righteousness laid up for you in heaven. With this crown and robe on Him, Pilate brings Him forth to the people, in order to melt their hearts in pity ; and while the blood was trickling down from His temples, and exquisite pain was felt by Him in His back and shoulders, which had been torn by the scourge, he cries, ' Behold the Man !' Look at Him, and say if you can desire that He should suffer more. How relentless must their malice have been which this could not satiate, and which would not say it is enough till He expired on the cross.

Nothing gives a more shocking view of the heart of the infidel than the fact, that this call of Pilate has been made the watchword of the scoffer, and the title of books filled with impious sarcasm. Depraved must be that understanding, and black must be that heart, which can select such a motto for its profanity, and look to a suffering Saviour only to revile Him. The spread of such blasphemy is like the pestilence walking in darkness. The virulence of infidelity has been excited to a great degree, by the wide diffusion of the Redeemer's name ; but it shall not be in her power to pluck one jewel from His crown, to expunge one article from our creed, or to pervert one real disciple.

Let us turn our thoughts from such children of the wicked one, to the hearts that are bleeding with sorrow and love ; and to such I say, ' Behold the Man !' Behold the Man, in whom

more of God is to be seen than in any angel or human being, for in Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; who passed by the nature of angels and took hold of yours; and in whom humanity appears more bright and lovely than it did in paradise. Excellences which the first Adam could not exhibit, adorn the second, and constitute in their exercise a part of that obedience by which you are made righteous.

Behold the Man of Sorrows, whom grief attended in every step of His course, and in every moment of His life, and whom it covered with its darkest gloom, and tore with its sharpest pangs in the garden and on the cross. Now, Christians, you cannot surely see Him thus set forth before you, without wonder at His condescension and gratitude for His love. Let the souls whom He has blessed and saved, strew their garments in His way, and crown Him in adoring homage. O let there not be reason to say, that His enemies were more eager to dishonour than we are to exalt Him. Let your blessings rest where malignity and insolence fixed this crown, and let every eye look to Him with ardent love and eager expectation.

Rejoice, Christians, that a very different crown and robe are now worn by your Lord. He hath a crown of purest gold, whose lustre is never tarnished, and to which the mightiest of His enemies shall be constrained to bow. His raiment is white as the light, and 'all His garments smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces.' It is said, after Mordecai's triumph over the craft and malice of Haman, 'that he went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white, and with a great crown of gold, and with a garment of fine linen and purple, and the city of Shushau rejoiced and was glad, and the Jews had light, and gladness, and joy, and honour.' And we have much more reason to rejoice in His exaltation who was abased for our sake, and who is enthroned for our salvation. The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice in the advantages it derives from the diffusion of His religion, the virtues of His disciples, and the gifts of His liberality; and let the Church be glad that He is head over all things for the advancement of her interests, and that the condescension and indulgence which He displayed on earth, it is His delight to manifest in a higher sphere.

Think what this exaltation of your Lord claims from you. It is this, that you should serve Him in holiness and righteousness all the days of your lives. You feel, I trust, that you can refuse nothing to such a Master, and that you can withhold

nothing from such a Friend. Let His love reign in your hearts, and let His life be manifest in yours.

Beware of expecting honour from men. Your Saviour was thus treated, to teach you to bear in silence the scorn of cruel pride; and if your Lord was crowned with thorns, you have no reason to complain that they are strewn in your path, or planted in your pillow. Be thankful that they are so few, and that the pain they give you is not more severe. Turn not aside from the path of duty on account of them, for 'thy shoes shall be iron and brass,' and take for a covering to your heads that hope of salvation which no thorn can pierce.

Look not with envy on any worldly glory. Amid the multitude of rose leaves, you see not the thorns, but the wearer feels them; and you behold the purple robe, but you see not the lacerated heart beneath it. It would check that envy and discontent, by which the poor make themselves miserable, were they to reflect on the miseries which find a way to the house of feasting and to the scene of triumph, and that the prosperous may have thoughts more vexing and nights more sleepless than theirs.

Let me call on you to continue looking unto Jesus. Amid the scorn of the wicked, a pious regard to Jesus will make you despise their abuse. Their scorn is no proof that the object of it is contemptible, nor is their censure any evidence that the act which they condemn is wicked. Be less solicitous about what the world will think of you, and more eager to show yourselves approved to God.

When you are forced to view characters that are disgraceful to human nature, look to Him who was its fairest ornament. When your hearts are disgusted and shocked by the impieties of the profane, the excesses of the sensual, and the cruelties of the malignant, consider Him who was so eminent in devotion, in purity, and in beneficence, and you will feel a complacency, which is both improving and delightful.

In pressing on to perfection, behold the Man 'who was altogether lovely.' Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and labour till your last moment, that you may be conformed to His image. You must hate the crown of pride, and the garment that is spotted by the flesh, and be able to say with Job, 'I put on righteousness, and it clothed me, and my judgment was as a robe and a diadem.' And in the hour of death may you see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God. In that hour, when the failing eye can scarcely discern the face of friendship any longer, and when every worldly scene is vanishing from the view, it must be truly

delightful to have a faith which can see our Lord in His beauty, and behold the better country as not afar off but near.

In the day of judgment, when every eye shall see the Son of Man in His glory, it will not be through the tears of regret and dismay that you shall behold Him, but with eyes sparkling with triumphant gladness. And in the world of glory, every eye shall be fixed on Him as the perfection of beauty and as the fountain of life. In that world there is a crown reserved for you which fadeth not away, and which is attended by no anxieties and fears. 'He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.' He will delight to honour all to whom He is precious, and to give the garments of praise for the sackcloth of holy grief.

Now let this be your purpose, before you leave this spot, 'I will look to the Lord, I will wait for the God of my salvation;' and this is the parting injunction of your Saviour, an injunction whose influence must make every effort seem easy, and lessen the terrors of every peril. 'Be thou faithful to the death, and I will give thee a crown of life.'

ADDRESS LXVIII.

And He, bearing His cross, went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew, Golgotha; where they crucified Him.

JOHN xix, 17, 18.

THE place where eminent men have died is generally marked with care. Almost every man is anxious to discover the precise spot where they drew their last breath, and took their final leave of the world. The interest which we feel in such places is always proportioned to the celebrity of their characters, to the cause in which they were engaged, and to the share which we have in the consequences of their struggles. How sacred is the spot where the martyr died, and where his last testimony was given to the cause of truth, and to the rights of conscience! No man of principle and feeling can behold it without catching new ardour in defence of religious liberty, a livelier gratitude for our tranquil state, and a stronger abhorrence of that proud and cruel intolerance, which condemns and punishes opposition to its views and wishes as the worst of crimes.

Christians, we now lead you to the spot where Jesus was

crucified. It was the hill Golgotha, or the place of skulls. Many malefactors had been sacrificed there to the justice of their country. There would be a diversity in the crimes for which they suffered, yet this variety was of itself a mournful proof of the extent of human depravity, and the power of malignant and covetous passions. Some of them might die in penitential sorrow, and others in sullen obduracy, but their life was demanded by the laws which they had violated. But how different is the victim that now bleeds! It is the Lamb without spot and blemish that is now sacrificed to the justice of God. And shall the righteous be as the wicked? In this case, 'He that knew no sin was made sin for us.' The Lord laid on Him, with His own full, free, and generous consent, the iniquities of us all, that we might be justified by His blood. The place selected for our Lord's death was not a spot hallowed by the symbols of God's presence, by the worship of the pious, or by their translation to glory; but gloomy, by the tokens of the Divine vengeance, and by the horrible despair and terrors of the wicked. Nor was the death which He underwent easy and tranquil, but a death appropriated to the worst criminals and attended with lingering and exquisite pain. And all this was done, because to Him our guilt was imputed, and He was treated as we deserved.

Here the trophies of death lay scattered around. The king of terrors seemed to expose here, in triumphant exultation, the bodies which he had broken and disfigured; and no place could be better suited to signalize the victory of the Prince of life, and to give the decisive blow to the last enemy. It was not merely in his territories, but in the heart and strength of his empire, that he was assaulted and vanquished. Some of these victims of death might maintain a longer struggle with him than others, but all had fallen. Here bones were heaped on bones, and dust on dust, the poor remains of what was once the seat of intelligence and comeliness; yet here Jesus abolished death, expiated sin, by which it had entered into the world, and purchased a nobler life than that which was forfeited.

The Jewish sacrifices were offered in the temple, but this oblation was not to be limited like theirs to a single people, but was to be a propitiation for the sins of the world. 'Jesus, that He might sanctify the people with His blood, suffered without the gates of Jerusalem.' The blessings of Christ's death are not limited by years, situation, or circumstances, by human bigotry or by human prejudice, but extend, wide as the expanded love of the generous Sufferer, to infancy and to age, to the poor and to the rich, to the civilized and to the savage,

to islands and continents, to rival sects and to the chief of sinners. It is strange that men should have taken delight in the idea of the exclusion of any of their fellow-creatures from the virtue of the cross, and imagine that they were honouring the God whose benevolence is infinite, by the anathemas of their own malignity. This is the view of the death of our Lord which Caiaphas was directed to deliver, though he understood not the import of his prediction, and would not have relished it if he had. He prophesied, 'that Jesus should die not for that nation only, but to gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.'

It was, that multitudes might feast their eyes with the spectacle, that the Son of Man was crucified on this elevated spot. And He submitted to it, to show that for you He was not ashamed to suffer, and that He wishes all the ends of the earth to look to Him and to be saved. When Isaac ascended the mount, he was not aware of the intention of his father, nor of the fate that awaited him; but Jesus knew this perfectly, and it was this which made Him go up, not merely with resignation, but with alacrity. 'And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.'

To Him I trust you are now looking. Your hearts are at the spot where He suffers, and it has been by the cords of His love, and by the attractions of His cross, that you have been drawn and will be kept there.

The Apostle's exhortation to the Hebrews, from the view which he had given them of the place where Christ suffered, was this, 'Let us, therefore, go out to Him without the camp bearing His reproach.' Well might he call the Hebrews to renounce the rites and ceremonies which Christ had abrogated, to rise superior to that foolish bigotry which made them dote on a temple which He would not honour with the noblest act of His priesthood, and to cultivate a liberality of spirit, worthy of the disciples of a Master whose death was so extensive in its object and influence. The Apostle considered that it would be a glorious proof of the benevolence and power of the Gospel, were they to lay aside their long-cherished prejudices, and to walk in enlightened candour and love to all. It was to no mortal leader, however famous, that he called them to go out, but to Christ, to whom it is good to draw near, and to whom it is our safety to cleave. They might be calumniated for acting in this manner; but how animating is the thought, 'it is His reproach, and the Spirit of God and of glory will rest upon you.'

Let it be your care to separate yourselves from the follies

and the pollutions of the world, their loose maxims and their pernicious ways. Show that ye are not of the world, even as Christ was not of it. Regulate not your creed by their maimed and perverted Christianity, nor your conduct by their low standard of morals, but be valiant for the truth as it is in Jesus, and for that pure and undefiled religion which keeps a man unspotted from the world. Put away every childish thing, every superstitious idea, and all the tendencies of the spirit of this world, and seeing ye have professed yourselves this day to be strangers and pilgrims on the earth, 'pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.' The pilgrim, intent on his journey, doth not set his heart on any object by which he passes, and it is not in the hut where he reposes for a night that he finds a home; and let your conversation be in heaven. The disappointments, and troubles, and alarms of the world, which are so painful to you, are sent with this message of mercy to prevent those attachments to earthly things, which would be your ruin: 'Arise, depart ye, this is not your rest, for it is polluted.' Can you consider it as a hardship to quit any object or scene when Jesus thus addresses you, 'Come with Me from Lebanon, My spouse, with Me from Lebanon, from the lions' dens and the mountains of leopards.' The world may reproach you as austere and precise, but Christ will own you as His peculiar people. Let every visit which you pay to the churchyard remind you of Golgotha. When we attend the funerals of our friends, we often see bones and skulls scattered by the sides of the grave. How solemn are the meditations which are excited by thus seeing the remains of bodies which we have often beheld fresh and comely with health and vigour; and how painful are the feelings which are awakened in some, in beholding the skulls and bones of those who were the desires of their hearts, and in being thus forced to reflect, that soon their skulls shall be as naked, and hideous, and senseless, as these, that their ashes shall be treated with as little ceremony, and that mourners shall be at their grave for another but not for them. But Jesus went to the place of skulls, and though He was not buried there, He died there, and His death gives us an ample security that the body shall be raised from the ruins of the grave to glory and immortality.

When we think on the millions of men that have died on this earth, we may call it the place of skulls. It is the land of the dying and of the dead. How much of the earth on which we tread once teemed with life. If there was a region on this earth where death could not seize, what multitudes would flock to it, and what sacrifices would be made to obtain the poorest

place of residence in it; but of every spot in this globe it may be said, 'What man is he that liveth here and shall not see death, and who shall deliver his soul from the power of the grave?' But there is a land of the living on high, where there is no more death, where man is no more dust, and his body shall be no more vile, where it is clothed with eternal life, and where the ensigns of mortality are for ever unknown. To that land let your hearts rise, advance daily nearer to it in your holy attainments; and if ye have tasted this day that the Lord is gracious, it is a pledge that you shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

Consider your life as a passage to the grave, and remember that you must go to it, like your Lord, bearing your cross. It belongs to your God to appoint your particular cross, and every man hath his own burden. Some, by the death of the young, who were the hope of their families, are made to say, 'I shall go down to the grave to my son mourning;' others, by the misconduct of their friends, are filled with the contempt of the proud; some, by the straits and anxieties of poverty, find their life made bitter; and others, whose worldly circumstances are prosperous, are unhappy by fear and melancholy. But consider that your cross will render the grave more welcome, where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest. Jesus suffered, being tried, that He might know how to succour the afflicted, and His strength shall be made perfect in your weakness. Jesus was led to Golgotha by cruel hands, but He Himself will lead you gently; and the feeble and the staggering, the timid and the sickly, He will encourage, uphold, and animate. You shall carry your cross to the grave, and leave it there for ever; and while in it the flesh rests in hope, your spirits shall soar to the Zion above, 'where they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.'

ADDRESS LXIX.

Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also His coat: Now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the Scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted My raiment among them, and for My vesture they did cast lots.—JOHN xix. 23, 24.

It was usual to distribute the garments of crucified persons among the soldiers who were employed in the crucifixion, and it was wisely ordered that this should be done to those of our

Lord. Had any remarkable interposition of Providence secured them to His friends, it might have been supposed that there was something sacred about them, and they might have been regarded with a superstitious veneration. We know how the Church of Rome hath honoured supposed fragments of these garments, and ascribed miraculous virtues to these fancied relics; and to guard His disciples from such folly, they were left to the will of the four soldiers by whom He was crucified. Your Saviour hath left real memorials of Himself in the records of His doctrine, in the graces of His character, and in the fruits of His Spirit, and these you cannot too highly prize. You have felt their virtue in the victories which they have enabled you to gain over temptation, in the moral health which they have imparted, and in the hopes which they have inspired.

This circumstance suggests the most important lessons to you. Hereby a very remarkable prophecy in the 22d Psalm was accomplished. It was the omniscience of God alone which could enable David, nearly eleven hundred years before it, to foretell that the Messiah should die by a mode of execution not practised in Judea, and that lots should be cast for His garments, a circumstance depending on the humour of the men that crucified Him. Prophecy never stooped to say what would be done with the robes of Herod, or the imperial purple of the Cæsars, when they were no more, but it describes minutely the fate of the garments of the meek and lowly Jesus. This was done, that in the fulfilment of this prediction an argument for the divinity of our religion might be presented, obvious to every capacity, and satisfactory to every candid mind. How serious and important is our hope for eternity, and, blessed be God, it rests on the Rock of Ages; and amidst the craft of infidel sophistry, and the scorn and abuse of the profane, it continues to purify and to bless the souls of the faithful.

Contemplate the humiliation of your Redeemer. He who covers the heavens with clouds, and clothes the fields with verdure, is stript of His garments, and sees them become the prey of the men of violence; and this indignity He endured with the same meekness and patience with which He bore the other insults which attended His crucifixion. No insult could provoke Him to wrath, and no cruelty impel Him to a single expression or deed of revenge. It was by thus humbling Himself to the death of the cross, that He obtained for you the best robe, that righteousness which covers all your sins, which secures your acceptance with the Judge of all, which delivers you from all the misgivings and tremors of guilt, and calls you to the brightest hopes of heaven and eternity.

The outer robe of Jesus was divided into four parts, and be thankful that the merits of His righteousness are extensively applied, and that their efficacy is felt, and their blessings are enjoyed in every quarter of the globe, in every variety of character, and in every diversity of condition.

These soldiers cast lots to whom His vest should belong, but His garment of salvation is brought within the view and the reach of all, and it is unto all, and upon all them that believe. Have you received this righteousness, and can you say, that, when conscious of the utter insufficiency of your own righteousness to save you from guilt and misery, and when you were hopeless and wretched, Jesus passed by you, and looked upon you, and spread His skirt over you, and covered you; that He swore unto you and entered into covenant with you, and you became His. That time of love, and that triumph of mercy, you can never forget; and I trust it is with adoring gratitude and fervid affection that you are now come to confess Him as the Lord your righteousness. The wedding garment which you have on is of His providing, as well as the feast itself, and the smell of that garment is 'like the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed.'

Rejoice, Christians, that Christ hath obtained for you the garments of holiness; and of the Church, as arrayed in these, the Psalmist thus speaks: 'The king's daughter is all glorious within, and her clothing is of wrought gold.' How poor seems the gorgeous apparel of kings' houses, and the soft raiment of hypocrisy and worldly complaisance, when compared with this! The graces of the Spirit operating in the heart, and displayed in the exercises of worship, in the duties of life, and in the commerce of the world, form that moral beauty which God loves, and constitute the true excellence of man, not specious and transient, but solid and lasting.

Jesus hath sanctified the mean attire which His poor saints wear. It is not from inattention to your interests, or indifference to your comfort, that He allots you so scanty a portion of the world's advantages, but to keep you from vain-glory, and to make you seek your happiness and your honour in better distinctions. The beggar may bless God for the rags that cover him, for they are more than he deserves, and more than was left to the crucified Saviour.

By this circumstance of His sufferings, Jesus hath sanctified to His people the violence of persecutors, which has often stripped the righteous of their garments, and left them to perish in the cold. Meditation on the lot of Christ will, in such a

condition, work patience, and those of them whose backs are uncovered for the tormentor's lash should remember that Christ was not only stripped for the scourge, but also for crucifixion.

Hereby our Lord has taught His people not to be solicitous about finery of apparel or costly array, but to adorn themselves with good works, and to be clothed with humility. There is a singularity in garb which some affect, which is so far from indicating humility, that it is the result of pride and obstinacy, and Christians are not to render themselves ridiculous by such austerity; but it is unworthy of them to be conformed to fashions improper and unsuitable, and to copy these with the eagerness and the solicitude of the children of vanity.

Our Lord hath taught us, by this circumstance, that lesson which he so often inculcated, to feed the hungry, and to clothe the naked. You may give a part of your own garments, or those of your children, to one needy object, and a part to another. It is unbecoming Christians, to have heaps of unnecessary raiment stored up, while the poor are walking in rags around them. Job says, 'If I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering; if his loins have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep, then let mine arm be broken from the bone.' The coats and garments which Dorcas made for the poor, were shown by the widows to Peter, in the chamber where her remains were lying, and it was not the attire of vanity, but of beneficence. Poor children are peculiar objects of compassion; and by pointing out to the young in your families, how different their attire is from that of many little boys and girls around them, you will effectually check their discontent, melt their hearts in pity, and teach them to relieve their indigent fellow-creatures in the most prudent and useful manner.

Our Lord has thus taught us to look forward to the period when our garments shall be parted, and when of all the apparel we may possess, nothing shall be allotted to us but a shroud, which corruption will soon destroy as well as the flesh it covers. How vain is all the pomp of this world, when its favourites, who were clothed in purple and scarlet, and fared sumptuously every day, must leave their wardrobe to the moth, and their carcasses to the worm. O that friends, when they are dividing the garments of dead relations, would recollect the parting of those of a crucified Saviour, and anticipate the period when, in their winding-sheet alone, they shall lie down in the grave!

Did these soldiers say of our Lord's seamless coat, 'Let us not rend it,' and shall not we be solicitous to maintain the unity of the Church? Too long has it been torn by the corruptions

of the loose, the novelties of the restless, and the violence of the headstrong. It is the will of Christ that there should be no schism in His body, and that the unity of the Spirit should be kept in the bond of peace; and the ordinance of the Lord's supper is admirably adapted to expand our benevolent affections, and to destroy these prejudices and envyings by which the harmony of the Church is broken. Arise from that table to walk in love, and to exemplify that happy union of purity and candour, of zeal and forbearance, which will adorn your profession, and conciliate the fierce and the contracted to the spirit of the Gospel.

And rejoice that Christ hath procured for you the robes of glory, to be worn for ever in that state in which inward felicity is associated with external splendour. He Himself hath been arrayed in all the majesty and brightness which heaven can bestow, and, for His sake, white robes shall be given to every one of you: His own hand shall clothe you with these, and in them you shall worship and rejoice in His presence for ever.

ADDRESS LXX.

When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple standing by whom He loved, He saith unto His mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith He to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.—JOHN xix. 26, 27.

IN this passage, the suffering Redeemer is presented to you in a light highly interesting to your hearts. Let every soul be excited to admire a character so amiable, a friendship so strong, and a filial affection so tender. The selfish and frozen heart, which sees nothing to attract or to improve it in such a scene, is as unfit for the exercise of a communion table, as for the charities of social life.

How strong was the attachment of Mary and of John to our Lord! The regard which John had for the Saviour has been often illustrated by his conduct and his writings. He leaned on His bosom; he followed Him with unabated zeal wherever He went; and, during His last sufferings, he is the only disciple who clings to Him. In this crowd of foes, my Saviour shall have at least one friend. He will see that there is one disciple whom no dread of violence can keep away from His cross. He made me a witness of His triumphs on Tabor, 'when His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light;'

and shall not I follow Him to Calvary, and show Him how my heart bleeds at His sufferings? Perhaps He may honour me with some intimation of His will; perhaps He may give a look or a word, which will tell me that, when dying, He thought on me in love.

The care which Mary took of Jesus in His infancy, the pleasure which swelled her heart when His doctrine and miracles crowned Him with glory, and the keenness with which she felt every indignity that was cast upon Him, show how tenderly she loved Him. It was affection that led her to Calvary. She says not, Why should I go? the sight of my distress will increase His anguish. I shall not have it in my power to administer to Him the least relief, or to whisper to Him the smallest consolation; and what can I expect from those who are thus hostile to innocence like His? Can a helpless female brave the fury of an exasperated multitude? But her fears were suppressed by faith and love. So determined was her resolution, that no persuasion could have detained her. 'I will go to Calvary, though I should die on the spot.' The providence of God kept her in safety; and, in the scene of agony, sent her balm to her wounds. Christians, ye are blushing that your attachment to Jesus is so cold and feeble in comparison with theirs. Open your hearts to the influence of the Holy Ghost, and He will shed abroad the love of Christ in them.

Our Lord looks with tender interest on these two witnesses of His sufferings. Dreadful as were the pains which our Lord now felt in His body, and sorrowful as was His heart even unto death, yet His eyes were fondly turned on the mother that bore Him, and on the friend whom He loved as His own soul. Though He had not uttered a syllable, that look would have convinced them that His heart was still theirs. If a look from Jesus renewed a backsliding Peter to repentance, this look must at once have soothed and fortified the heart of His mother and His friend. It was like a gleam of sunshine, calming the fury and lessening the horrors of the tempest. It has been sometimes held forth as a proof of the magnanimity of the dying, by those who wished to do honour to their memory, that in the acute sufferings of their last hour, they seemed to feel no anxiety save for the comfort and the happiness of their connections. And shall our Saviour's solicitude for the welfare of His friends, thus affectingly expressed in the hour and power of darkness, excite no admiration, and receive no eulogy?

Oh that Jesus would look on me in pity! To Thy kind attention I have not the smallest claim; but in turning to me Thy compassionate eye, Thou wilt show the exceeding riches

of Thy grace, and raise a heart, almost despairing, to peace and to hope.

But was this all the interest which our Lord expressed in His mother's forlorn situation? He said to John, 'Behold thy mother!' Let thy feeling heart try to conceive how much is comprised in these three words. Receive her into thy dwelling, and let her be a sharer of its comforts. Pity her infirmities, and assuage her griefs, by pointing out to her those blessed hopes which My doctrine inspires, and which My resurrection shall confirm. Let her find in thee all the gratitude, the kindness, and the veneration, which a virtuous child thinks that he owes to his earliest and tenderest friend. Our Saviour knew that, so far from viewing it as a burden, the charge would gratify John exceedingly; and that to be guardian to the mother of his Lord, would appear to him a greater honour than to be possessor of a throne. Men are often mistaken in their ideas of those to whose care they commit their relations, for the appearance of gentleness, benevolence, and integrity, is often assumed for the basest purposes. But Jesus knew what was in man; and if John had not been worthy of the charge, it would not have been assigned to him. While John had a charge in common with the other disciples, to preach the Gospel among the nations, the mother of Jesus was made his peculiar care.

To confirm Mary's confidence in the care of John, Jesus says to her, 'Woman, behold thy son!' For thee he will cultivate the affection of a child. The disciple who stands by thy side, will cherish thee for My sake. He hath a heart like My own, in gentleness and goodness; and in him thou shalt find unabated kindness and dutiful respect. Think not that the care of My friend over thee shall ever cease; for these few words which I have now spoken to him will secure thee a home in his dwelling, and a protection which shall shield thee to thy grave.

From that hour, that disciple took her to his own home. What a beautiful example of prompt compliance with the Saviour's will was this! And never was the acceptance of this charge repented of. Christ's mother, in his house, was the honour and the joy of his dwelling.

Christians, we trust that you are now prepared to honour your Redeemer's name. Thou brightest pattern of the kind affections, in whose spirit and salvation all the families of the earth shall be blessed; whom the mother blesses for the kindness that shelters her grey hairs, and the child exalts for the pleasure which he finds in his filial duty; we pay Thee the homage of our hearts, and whatever Thou committest to our charge, we

will keep faithfully to the death. Never shall Thy altars fall in our dwellings, nor Thy throne in our hearts.

Your hearts have been melting at the view of the kind affections of your Saviour, and are, I trust, eager to listen to the influence which they ought to have on your moral improvement. This scene strongly recommends to you, whose parents are living, the most affectionate care of them. We live in perilous times, 'in which men are lovers of their own selves, disobedient to parents, without natural affection.' Some, on the most frivolous pretexts, put away from their dwellings parents sinking under the weight of years, and abandon them, without a blush, to the charity of the public. There are others, who, though they invite parents in their decline to live with them, yet, if there be one place more comfortless than another in their dwellings, it is assigned to them; and, when the gay or the rich honour them with their visits, they keep these aged relations out of view, as if their presence would mar the splendour and the mirth of their feasts. Alas! how many ruin their parents by their extravagance! How infamous is he, who, to pamper his appetites, or to gratify the instruments of his vices, squanders what parents had earned by the sweat of their brow, and dooms them to an old age of poverty and dependence! Your hearts are now swelling with virtuous indignation at the unnatural beings who are guilty of such wickedness. This is a pledge, that in the sweetest of your comforts your parents shall share; that, whatever connections you may form, your hearts shall not be withdrawn from them; that, whatever prosperity you may attain, you will hail it as putting it in your power to brighten the evening of their days; and that, whatever may be their sorrows, they shall not weep alone.

Some, under pretence of extreme sensibility, abandon the place where relations are dying, and commit them to the care of strangers. But will the hand of a mercenary keeper wipe the eye of affection so softly as that of a son or a daughter? Or will a sick parent recline with as much pleasure on the arm of another, as on that of a child? Canst thou forget the sacrifices which thy mother made for thy happiness; the sleepless hours in which she watched by thy cradle; how thy first cry roused her from slumber; and, when disease made thee loathsome to others, how she cherished thee in her bosom? 'If ye love Me, keep My commandments;' and ye know the fifth.

You have in this scene a strong sanction to virtuous friendship. Let the vain declaimers against Christianity as hostile to friendship, look at this scene, and blush for their ignorance

and temerity. How many are the blessings which flow from virtuous friendship! How easy is the aching head, when she places it on her bosom! We tread with confidence in a path the most rough and unfrequented, when she guides us by the integrity of her heart, and by the skilfulness of her hand. How peaceful is the dwelling of affliction, when she is there to bind up the broken heart, and to comfort the feeble mind! And how cheerful is even the closing hour, when she is near the bed of the dying, receiving the parting charge, commending the soul to God, and animating the last adieu!

Ye young disciples, study well the characters of those who solicit your friendship. Remember the distinguishing features in the character of John. He was, in a high degree, mild, pious, and benevolent. Make no friendship with an angry man, for it will not be lasting; nor with a mercenary man, for this will be dangerous to your temporal interests; nor with one who has no reverence for the name or the word of God, lest you get a snare to your souls. Hypocrisy hath many artful disguises. Pray to God to show you where you may safely place your hearts.

You wished, while you heard of the charge that was committed to John, that you had been honoured with such a proof of the Saviour's confidence and affection. But listen to what He saith to you: 'Behold My mother and My brethren! Whosoever doth the will of My Father who is in heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother.' There are some at the same table with you, whose poverty, or whose sorrows, may require your aid and your sympathy; and to your care Jesus now commends them. The widow, whose conduct is marked by sobriety and meekness; the poor, whom no hardships can drive to impatience against God, or to injustice to man; the virtuous young person, who has none to foster his talents, and whose spirit is broken in employments far beneath those to which his eager mind aspired; and the old disciple, who is neglected by unfeeling connections;—these are the relations of the Saviour, and to your kind attentions He asserts their claim. He charges you to visit these fatherless and widows in their affliction. The voice of joy hath forsaken their dwelling, and the shadow of death covers it. He charges you to relieve these poor saints. How comfortless is the poor man's hovel, and how pitiable is the cold and the hunger to which he must often submit! He charges you to patronize that friendless youth. How sad is his condition, who is excluded from instruction for which his heart pants, and from situations which he might fill with honour and advantage! These aged saints

He commands you to respect and to soothe. How painful is the state of the old man who hath no friendly arm on which to lean, no friendly ear into which to pour his complaints, whose weaknesses are exposed, and whose grey hairs are insulted by petulance, and pride, and folly ! If the orphan see not in you a father, nor the widow a judge ; if the poor find not in you those who wisely consider their case ; if the friendless youth solicits your influence in vain ; if the old man spreads out his shrivelled arms, and there is none to comfort him,—Christ will consider this as if it had been a neglect of Himself. If, on the other hand, we fulfil to them the laws of sympathy and kindness, Jesus will say, ‘ Inasmuch as ye did it to one of the least of these My brethren, ye did it unto Me.’

Have you received charges from dying friends ? let them be sacred to you. Have they enjoined you to take care of the infirm and the helpless ; to know the God of your fathers, and to serve Him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind ; to renounce all connection with those whose aim they see is to entice you to ruin ; to cultivate the good opinion of the prudent and the respectable ; to pay what they owe, that the stain of dishonesty be not attached to their name ; to maintain in their dwellings those altars to the Lord which they have reared in them ; to aid those institutions of mercy of which they were active friends, and from the support of which flowed the purest pleasures ?—cherish these charges in your memory, and with them cheerfully comply. If we disregard the injunctions of dying friends, every memorial of them will have a tongue to upbraid us ; and the thought of meeting them at the judgment-seat will fill the soul with horror. If, on the other hand, we fulfil them, we will have peace in our own minds. Fancy will exhibit them as gratified with our care to do all their pleasure ; and hope will whisper, that when we too have dying requests to make, to them our surviving friends will pay equal regard.

Let none of you dread, lest attention to the claims of piety and charity may injure your worldly interests. ‘ There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth.’ The chamber in your dwellings, set apart as the refuge of the homeless orphan, and as the resting-place of solitary age ; the wine and the oil in your presses, for the relief of the feeble and the diseased ; the garments in your wardrobes, for the naked ; the books in your library, for dispersion among those who are lifting up their voice for understanding ; and the money laid by you in store, for supporting and extending the institutions of Christianity, will bring the blessing of heaven on all that you have.

Now may the Spirit of love and goodness rest on your souls ;

and may you go from the communion table to bless your households, by the temper and the virtues which sweeten domestic life. Amen.

ADDRESS LXXI.

After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to His mouth.—JOHN xix. 28, 29.

THE incident mentioned in this passage will not be deemed trivial by those who consider it with due attention. All of you, probably, have witnessed the agonies of the dying. You have seen assiduous kindness moistening their lips, and attempting to pour down the reviving cordial. But in your Saviour's extreme thirst, vinegar was given to relieve it, and not by the hands of His disciples and His friends, but by those of the soldiers who were stationed round the cross. When David longed and said, 'O that one would give me to drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem!' three of his mighty men burst through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of this well, and brought it to him; but when David's Lord cried out, 'I thirst!' the soldiers filled a sponge with vinegar, put it upon a reed, and lifted it to His mouth.

Reflect, Christians, on this complaint of your Saviour, 'I thirst.' Thirst is one of the most powerful appetites of the body, and when it is extreme, the uneasiness which it creates is intolerable. History relates the dreadful expedients to which men have had recourse for relieving it; that battles have been fought by armies, to gain possession of wells and springs; and that even a kingdom hath been sacrificed for a draught of water. The thirst which is felt in burning climates, and by men racked by torture, must be painful beyond what we can conceive.

The thirst of our Lord arose from His bodily sufferings. The moisture of His body must have been exhausted by His sweat in the garden, by the scourging which He endured in the judgment-hall, by His painful ascent to Calvary, by His being so long suspended on the cross, and by the blood which incessantly trickled down from His head, His hands, and His feet. You have seen a person dying in a fever. You have seen his lips become parched, his tongue failing, and his heart faint;

and if disease produces such effects, what influence must not the torture of our Lord have had upon Him?

The anguish of our Lord's mind was another cause of this thirst. 'A broken spirit dries up the bones.' So intimate is the connection betwixt the mind and the body, that anguish, if it is deep and violent, drinks up the spirits. And never was there sorrow like unto the sorrow of Jesus, with which the Lord afflicted Him in the day of His fierce anger.

Who is it that complains, 'I thirst?' It is the Father of the rain. It is He who sends the springs into the valleys, to give drink to every beast of the field, and who refreshes with showers the grass and the lilies of the field. It is He who gives the vine that fruit which cheers the heart of man, and who hath opened to us wells of salvation, and fountains of living water.

Painful as this thirst was to our Saviour, it was endured for our happiness. In consequence of it, the mountains drop down new wine, and the hills flow with milk, streams break forth in the desert, and the voice of mercy cries aloud, 'Whosoever will, let him come, and take the water of life freely!'

Did your Saviour thirst, and shall you fret and murmur on account of your want of the comforts of life? 'Is it not enough that the disciple should be as his Master, and the servant as his Lord?' Did your Saviour suffer need, and shall you expect to abound? Was His path rugged and comfortless, and shall you expect to 'wash your steps with butter, and that the rock should pour you out rivers of oil?' Were clouds and darkness round about Him, and can you expect that the sun of prosperity will always shine upon your heads? Consider Him who said, 'I thirst,' lest ye be weary and faint in your minds.

But at what period was it that our Lord made this complaint? The Evangelist tells us it was after our Lord had committed His mother to the care of John. He felt His thirst before, yet He complains not of it, nor asks relief, till He had provided a refuge for His mother, in the kind attentions of the disciple whom He loved. Men generally imagine, that it is unreasonable to expect expressions or deeds of benevolence, friendship, or compassion, from persons under overwhelming distress. Listen to the language of many in sorrow, and you will hear only from them details of what they have suffered, or complaints of what they feel. To obtain relief for themselves, occupies their thoughts far more than to secure the comfort of a forlorn relation. But Christ's conduct shows, that the comfort of His desolate mother was dearer to Him than any relief which His thirst required. Christ's care of Mary, expressed at any time, must have been highly gratifying; but it was pecu-

liarly soothing when declared by lips which death was in a few moments to close, and suggested by a heart which cleaved to her, even while it was breaking with sorrow.

Divine generosity glorifies the Saviour's cross, but vile selfishness dishonours the deathbed of many. It wishes every ear open to its cries, and every heart engrossed with its sorrows. The deathbed of the selfish is a scene which love neither honours with its tears nor with its recollection. Disgust checks the tears of the visitant, and shame reddens the cheek at behaviour so opposite to what the charities of nature and of religion prompt. From such a scene we turn to the cross of Jesus. There I see a love strong in death; a love that braves its horrors for our sake; a love which, while suffering for the salvation of millions, sought out for a mother a protector and a home.

Our Saviour made this complaint when He knew that all things were now accomplished. He saw His sufferings approaching to their close. He looks down on the sides of the mountain which He had climbed, a mountain burning with fire, and quaking with the tempest; and He had but one step more to take, to reach the summit of rest and glory. Men may be mistaken as to the state of their affliction. After some violent convulsions, they may be ready to imagine, 'surely the bitterness of death is past,' and yet struggles more severe may be destined for them, ere they reach the place where the weary are at rest; but Jesus knew all things. He knew the moment, and the pang, destined to be His last.

Our Lord would not utter this complaint till the period appointed for it was come; so sacred, in His eye, was the order which His Father had fixed for His sufferings.

Christians, your souls thirst, but not from torture or anguish, like your Lord's. They thirst in pious desire, and from a strong consciousness of your spiritual poverty. 'My soul thirsteth for God;' He is here. My soul thirsteth for the water of life; it flows before you. To Thee, O Jesus! I present the request of the woman of Samaria, 'Give me this water;' but I will not say with her, 'that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw;' for I will seek Thy favour while I live, and frequent Thy table till I am called to living fountains above.

Our Lord made this complaint, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. The Evangelist refers to Psalm lxxix. 21. Our Saviour was determined that none of His adversaries should have it in their power to say, that the minutest prediction concerning His sufferings was unaccomplished. The honour of His word must be dear to His heart, when, in the midst of His

anguish, He discovered such a care that its prophecies might be fulfilled. On this book the stain of falsehood shall never be fixed; and Jesus will not disregard on the throne that volume which He was so eager to fulfil on the cross? The companion of His cross is ever before Him on His throne. Did He discover such anxiety for the accomplishment of prophecies of insulting and cruel treatment to Himself, and will He be reluctant to fulfil those which respect His glory and His triumphs? Was He solicitous that, as the Scriptures had said, His garments should be parted, and that insolent contempt should pour upon Him all the indignities which had been predicted; and will not He, according to the sure word of prophecy, reign to the ends of the earth, and bring adoring millions to His feet? 'Believe His word, so shall ye be established; believe His prophets, so shall ye prosper.'

Ere you leave this scene, Christians, consider the treatment which your Lord received in answer to His complaint. When men imagine that their complaints will be treated with neglect and with insult, they strive to suppress them. How painful is it to describe our sorrows to an inattentive ear, or to spread out our distresses before a careless eye! How painful is it to hear the voice of scorn and of reproach, in answer to our lamentations! But although Jesus knew the cruel insult which awaited Him, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, He said, 'I thirst.' Where, at this moment, were you, ye angels, who do His commandments, hearkening to the voice of His word? Where were you, ye just men made perfect, whom He causes to drink of the rivers of His pleasure? Where were you, ye multitudes, to whom He cried on the last and great day of the feast, 'If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink,' that ye came not to quench the Saviour's thirst? When Hagar was greatly distressed for thirst in the wilderness of Beersheba; when she went to a distance from her son, that she might not see him die, and lifted up her voice and wept, God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water, and she went and filled her bottle with water, and gave him to drink. But the Father of mercies left the relief of His beloved Son to men, strangers to pity. This vessel of vinegar was set near the cross for the use of the Roman soldiers, whose common drink was vinegar diluted with water; but when our Lord cried, 'I thirst,' they did not mix it with water, but gave Him the vinegar alone, in a contemptuous manner, and with no humane or compassionate view.

You see, Christians, the sponge filled with vinegar at your Saviour's mouth; but have you not observed the hand of

Divine Justice raising to His lips a cup, the wine of which is red and full of mixture? Behold Him wringing out the dregs of it. It was of this cup, when He beheld it prepared for Him, that He once said, 'Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not My will, but Thine be done.'

Behold with what calmness Christ bears this insulting treatment from His enemies! When He was hungry, He saw a fig-tree, and 'He came to it if haply He might find some fruit thereon; but finding none, He said, Let no fruit grow on thee from henceforth; and it withered away.' His thirst was more violent now than His hunger was then; yet, O Divine meekness! instead of speaking to them in His wrath, and consuming them with His lightnings, He opens not His mouth.

Did Jesus receive thus calmly the sponge of vinegar, and shall not you take, without a murmur, the cup of sorrow from your Father's hand? It is a cup prepared for you in wisdom and love. 'The cup which My Father giveth Me, shall I not drink it?'

In the day of your affliction, your distress may be neglected, and even insulted; but complain not that no cordial is administered to you, when your Saviour was thus treated. Envy not the wicked when they eat their costly delicacies, drink wine in bowls, and chaunt to the sound of the viol; for Jesus can infuse a sweetness into your cup of cold water, and bless your bread and your herbs.

It is seldom that criminals, even while receiving the due reward of their deeds, are treated with cruelty. Every attention is shown them, of which their condition admits. But though the ear of Jesus was never shut to the voice of misery, though He was the Holy One and the Just, and though His behaviour in suffering was so meek and so patient, He was denied the meanest comforts by those who were so much indebted to His goodness and long-suffering. At this melancholy view of human depravity, your hearts are sighing. There is nothing which the corrupted mind hates so implacably as goodness; and the brighter it shines, the more is its malignity stimulated. Bless God that you have been renewed in the spirit of your minds, and labour to cherish a disposition to beneficence, and a delight in acts of goodness.

You feel at this moment indignation at the conduct of these soldiers; but take heed that you do not act in a similar manner to your Lord. If ever you are deaf to the cries of the poor; if ever you regard their miseries with a disdainful eye; if by reproaches and upbraidings, you feed them with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink, you are treading

in the steps of these men. But I hope better things of you, although I thus speak.

Thirst not after any vicious indulgence. Imagine not that sin has any new pleasures, which you may enjoy with less injury to the peace of your souls, than those which you have found to be more bitter than wormwood. Contemplating Jesus receiving the vinegar, can you look with delight on intemperance mingling her draught? The drunkard's mirth is madness, and his habits are chains of darkness.

To you, Christians, Jesus saith, as He did to the woman of Samaria, 'Give Me to drink.' Give Him to drink of Jacob's well. The graces of religion, in lively exercise, are delightful to His heart. I trust His language to that person, while she remained ignorant of His character, is not applicable to you: 'If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water.' I have received Him as the unspeakable gift of God—a gift which claims my everlasting gratitude; and of His living water I have been drinking, and it shall be in me a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

ADDRESS LXXII.

He said, It is finished.—JOHN xix. 30.

THE last words of the dying are listened to with solemn attention, and preserved with care in the memories of their surviving friends. You have now heard, Christians, the last words which were uttered by your Redeemer upon earth, and by you they can never be forgotten.

But what was finished? The sufferings of Jesus were now at an end. Our Saviour's life on earth had been spent in toil and sorrow; and its closing scene had been marked by excruciating torture of body, and by anguish of mind, which no heart could have borne but His own. But when He uttered this shout, He saw the sword of justice returning to its scabbard, the powers of darkness fleeing from His presence, and that mansion opening its gates to receive Him, where He should enter into peace. A man in a severe illness contemplates with delight the symptoms of a favourable crisis. The shipwrecked seaman sits on the beach, and surveys, in transport of soul, the devouring deep from which he has been rescued, and the waves and billows with which he struggled. How exquisite must

have been our Saviour's delight, when He saw these floods retreating which had gone over His soul, and that anguish abating which had wasted His strength! O Lord Jesus, Thy days of grief are now terminated. No more shalt Thou appear as a Man of Sorrows. I see angels welcoming Thee to Thy rest, and joy eternal settling on Thy head.

This exclamation of our Lord intimates that the ceremonial system was now abolished. The ceremonial law was given for the wisest purposes. It was a shadow of good things to come. Burdensome as it was, the Jews were strongly attached to it. By the distinction which it maintained betwixt them and other nations, their vanity was flattered, and their confidence in the Almighty's peculiar regard to Israel was confirmed. They lost sight of the purposes for which it was appointed. They imagined that when the Messiah came, He would make their religion the religion of the world; they figured to themselves the idols of the heathen falling before the ark of God, and the kings of the earth bringing their honour and their glory into the temple of Jerusalem. But when our Lord gave Himself a sacrifice for us, all the prefigurations of His death were superseded. The true bread is come down from heaven, the fountain of life is opened, and the Lamb of God bleeds. When our Lord uttered these words, the protecting angel departed from the temple of Zion, and the Roman armies soon razed it to the foundations. Mortifying as this was to the Jews, it was an event most happy to the Gentile world. The Father may now be worshipped everywhere in spirit and in truth. Our religious rites are few and simple, and our sacrifices are those of justice and mercy. Look, then, Christians, to the cross of Jesus, and behold your passover sacrificed for you. Behold Him by whom grace and truth came, and by whom types and shadows passed away. Behold Him to whom every rite pointed as the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

This shout announced that the powers of darkness were now vanquished. 'For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.' The horrid corruptions in sentiment and practice which covered the earth, proved the extent of Satan's influence. The reformers, who had risen up in various ages to correct the errors and vices of men, found the torrent too violent to be stemmed by their efforts. The work was reserved for the 'Man of God's right hand.' Our Saviour, in the course of His life, had manifested His power in repelling the temptations of the devil, and in driving him from the bodies and souls of which he had taken possession. But it was on Mount Calvary that the decisive

battle was fought. There every effort was made by the legions of hell to defend their conquests, and to drive back, with dishonour, the Redeemer, who came to take the prey from the mighty. Behold Him 'spoiling principalities and powers, and making a show of them openly, triumphing over them in His cross.' And can you forbear exclaiming, 'I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously?' The joy of other victories is often mixed with feelings of regret for the slaughter by which they have been gained; but there is no circumstance attending this victory to mar the fervour or the pleasure of your triumph. Satan, with his temptations, you may now defy; for his head is bruised, and his power is broken. The world, with its pleasures and its evils, you may now set at nought; for to you it is crucified by the cross of Christ. Over death, with its terrors, you may now exult; for Christ hath destroyed it. 'O sing unto the Lord a new song, for He hath done marvellous things: His right hand and His holy arm hath gotten Him the victory!'

This exclamation of our Lord assures us, that a full atonement was now made for sin. The necessity of an atonement for sin has been almost universally felt. The wishes of the anxious heart, the inquiries of the wounded spirit, and the various methods by which men have attempted to appease the wrath of the Most High, are indisputable proofs of this. 'It was not possible that the blood of bulls or of goats could take away sin,' or that the tears of penitence could wash away the stains of guilt.' But what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God hath accomplished by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and by a sin-offering condemning sin in the flesh.' 'He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities.' When our Lord cried 'It is finished,' He saw that reconciliation had been made for iniquity; that redemption through His blood would be proclaimed to the ends of the earth; that the hearts of the guilty would be sprinkled from an evil conscience; and that deliverance from wrath might now, with the cheerful acquiescence of Divine justice, be granted to all that should come unto God by Him.

Look, ye disciples of Jesus, to the cross of your Lord. Are you grieved that your hearts are so cold? What can fill them with holy fervour like the contemplation of your Saviour's love? Are you sighing under the consciousness of guilt? and are you tempted to conclude that your sins are too atrocious to be forgiven? Behold the blood poured out, which cleanseth from all sin!

It is to be lamented that so much ingenuity and learning have been employed to expunge from the Christian system a doctrine so soothing as this is to the troubled heart. Let the adversaries of this doctrine go to the abode of the man who, after a long struggle with remorse and despair, hath obtained mercy and peace through the blood of the Lamb; let them mark the serenity of his countenance and the unspeakable joy of his bosom; let them listen to the grateful effusions of his heart to God, and follow his steps of active charity in relieving his fellow-creatures. And can you, after seeing all this, bear the thought of driving him back to the fearful pit, of making his eyes again a fountain of tears, and of putting again into his hand the instrument of death? Will it gratify you to hear him exclaim, 'The pleasing delusion is past; hell is open for me, and I am undone for ever!' If there is a spark of compassionate feeling in the heart, it must shrink from this deed of horror, and lead the disputer to question the soundness of speculations which tend to consequences so tremendous, and which can only be maintained by wresting the Scriptures.

To you, Christians, the atonement of Christ appears a doctrine full of grace and truth. You have already received it; but I beseech you, at this solemn moment, to open your hearts wide to its cheering and sanctifying influence, 'to wash your robes, and to make them white in the blood of the Lamb.'

In His dying shout our Lord intimated to His followers that a perfect pattern of excellence for their imitation had now been exhibited. The saints, under the former dispensation, left us an example of various graces and virtues; but these were attended with many imperfections. In the character of Christ we see nothing but the purest and the brightest excellences.

In His intercourse with His Father, He showed the confidence of faith, the fervour of prayer, and the patience of hope. In mingling with His friends, He instructed us how to sympathise with the sorrows and to bear with the infirmities of our brethren. In His conduct to His enemies, He taught us the meekness which suppresses every emotion of revenge and the generosity which overcomes evil with good. He taught us to receive applause with humility and injuries with patience. In the wilderness, He teaches you to resist the most ensnaring suggestions of the devil; in the garden, to bow in silence to the will of heaven; and on the cross, to suffer and to die in patience and charity. In Christ's character, we see affability, with its softest speech and most winning smile; charity weeping for him that was in trouble, and stretching out her hand

to deliver the helpless; zeal reproving, and entreating, and exhorting, with all long-suffering and doctrine; fidelity, which no temptation could corrupt, and no threats could intimidate; diligence, which never lost a moment in sloth, nor needed to regret one neglected opportunity of usefulness; and devotion, walking with God, and having her conversation in heaven. Having shown us how to live, how to suffer, and how to die, Jesus said, 'It is finished.' I have left them an example that they should follow My steps. Let this example animate you to a patient continuance in well-doing. I exhort you to walk even as Christ also walked.

But why did your Lord utter this shout ere He expired? He did it for the shame and the confusion of His enemies. It is, in this view, like the shout of the victor increasing the mortification and terror of the vanquished. The enemies of Jesus said, when He appeared among them, 'This is the heir, come let us kill Him, and the inheritance shall be ours;' but how much were they disappointed when they found that their devices to ruin Him had issued in His aggrandisement and in their complete dishonour! Nor could their disgrace be concealed. This exclamation of the Conqueror proclaimed it to angels and to men. It showed that they could have no hope of renewing the contest. With Him they could struggle no more; and though they might oppose the progress of His kingdom in the world, the whole earth should be filled with His glory.

What added to the shame of our Lord's enemies was this, that He stood alone in the struggle. There was no hand but His lifted up, and that hand 'dashed in pieces the enemy.' Now was the promise accomplished to the Redeemer, 'His enemies will I clothe with shame.' This shout of the Saviour was confounding to His enemies, as the curse denounced against the serpent in Eden was; as the sentence of condemnation at the great and terrible day of the Lord will be. Never was shame poured on objects that deserved it more or that could feel it more painfully.

But Jesus uttered this dying shout, to show His complacency and exultation in the completion of our redemption. The more arduous and important any work is, the more pleasure do we feel when it is accomplished in a proper manner. In the prospect of His last struggle, Jesus was 'amazed and very heavy.' But now, when He saw glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and disappointment to all the plots and efforts of hell, the most triumphant gladness took possession of His heart. When the world was created, God saw what He had made,

and pronounced it good ; and could Jesus feel less complacency when He saw it redeemed ? This was a complacency worthy of the redemption that inspired it and of the generous bosom that felt it—a complacency which never decays, and which it is the will of His Father that He should for ever cherish. It was a pledge of the exultation which He will feel ‘when the end shall come, when He shall have put all His enemies under His feet, and when He shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all.’

Our Lord uttered this shout for the joy of His friends. Who can tell what influence it had on His disciples, who stood by the cross ? It would strike them that more was intimated by it, than that His struggle with death was terminated. They would recollect His statements of the great objects of His life and sufferings ; and they must have felt emotions of exultation in this solemn assurance of their full accomplishment. This effect we know it had upon them, when the tumult of grief and fear had completely subsided, and when the resurrection of their Lord had convinced them that all was well. These words, ‘It is finished,’ have often been the consolation of the penitent, the rest of the dying, and the triumph of the redeemed from among men. Christ’s failure in this work would have been our ruin. ‘The redemption of the soul is precious ;’ and had not He accomplished it, it must have ceased for ever. Christ’s success is our glory and our salvation. Let these words be ever present to your view ; study their amazing import ; search out their hidden consolations, and may the joy of the Lord be your strength.

You have seen the malignity of sin in your Lord’s sufferings ; ye beheld it put away by the sacrifice of Himself : but I trust you feel a stronger detestation of it than ever, even while you rejoice in hope of escaping the damnation to which it leads.

Consider, Christians, what example you are leaving to the friends who shall survive you. Can you bear the thought that your relations shall never think of your conduct, but to mark the vices which they should abhor, and the follies which they should shun ? Is it not your wish that they should trace your footsteps in the way to Zion, and testify to the honour of your memory, that you lived and died like saints ?

In a short time your struggle with corruption and with sorrow shall close. You feel that you cannot be fully happy till the existence of sin is terminated in your hearts. That period is so near to some of you, that while God gives me this charge with respect to you all, ‘Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God ; say unto them, your iniquity is pardoned ;’

He commands me thus to address others, 'Your warfare is accomplished.' To them Christ Himself says, 'I will not drink from henceforth of the fruit of the vine, till I drink it new with you in the kingdom of My Father.' Be ye therefore sober and diligent; watch unto prayer; and be faithful to the death, that you may finish your course with joy. Amen.

ADDRESS LXXIII.

But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there-out blood and water.—JOHN xix. 34.

THE bodies of the dead are generally treated with all suitable care and respect. Surviving friends linger by their side in pensive tenderness. With decent usages they are attired for the coffin and prepared for the grave; and the place of their repose is guarded with watchful care. The most savage natures seldom do an indignity even to the corpse of an enemy, and no injury which a man may have done to others during his life, is thought to justify the abuse of his remains by any human being.

How different was the case with the body of our Lord? Ere it was committed to the care of His friends, one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and blood and water issued from the wound. This horrid outrage was committed by the soldier without any authority from his superiors, and was designed to gratify his own barbarous humour, or the malignity of the Jews; but the most important ends were accomplished by it under the direction of an overruling Providence. If what is called by the Evangelist 'water,' was the fluid which surrounds the heart, the certainty of our Lord's death is demonstrated; for, to a person alive, such a wound must have been fatal. On the fact of our Lord's death the salvation of man depends; for if the Messiah did not die, our guilt is yet unexpiated, the justice of God is still unappeased, and the penalty of the law is still to be endured. The death of Christ is the life of your hope, the price of your redemption, and the source of your courage in the prospect of dissolution. If it was water in the literal sense of the term, it was a miraculous testimony to the glory of the Sufferer, and to the acceptance of His sacrifice, and was worthy of being recorded with all that solemnity and precision which mark the narrative of the Apostle John, and of being numbered with the prodigies which signalized the Saviour's death. It is remarkable that while John passes over in silence the external wonders which attended the crucifixion, he

expatiates on this, and appears solicitous that his testimony to it should be credited. It was a display of power far more glorious than that which, in the days of old, brought water from the flinty rock, and points out the death of Christ as an abundant and perpetual source of spiritual blessings.

Meditate, Christians, on that which was represented by this stream of blood and water. It is the justifying merit and the sanctifying grace of the blessed Jesus, and you know that both are absolutely necessary. Man was guilty, liable to the Divine vengeance, and utterly unable to give satisfaction for the least of his offences. In vain shall men surround God's altar with floods of tears or with streams of blood, for it is not possible that these can take away sin. Of what avail are the criminal's professions of sorrow, or his offers of his most valuable possessions, to stop the procedure of public justice against him; and can we suppose that they will appease the wrath of the Judge of all? If repentance cannot bring back to the prodigal the health he has lost and the money he has squandered in his excesses, it is foolish to imagine that it can regain the peace he has forfeited and avert the doom he has incurred. But behold the Saviour dies, His blood is shed for remission of sins unto many, and all that trust in it have peace with God. Such is the efficacy of this atonement, that the most aggravated offences may be forgiven for its sake, and the most powerful of all motives to holiness are those which it suggests. Do your hopes of pardon rest on the sacrifice of Christ? I trust this is your answer, 'I have fixed my confidence there, and I will never withdraw it.'

But man also was polluted, his nature and life were depraved, and how shall this be removed? It is in vain to attempt it by palliating human depravity, or talking in swelling language of the dignity of our nature. The softening epithets applied to many vices prove only the low state of moral perception and feeling in those who employ them. The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God, its splendid donations, the parade of vain glory, and the exploits which it celebrates as the noblest display of courage and patriotism, are often the triumph of pride, cruelty, and revenge. It is the sanctifying grace of Christ which alone can renovate our nature, destroy its evil propensities, and form in it those principles and affections in the exercise of which we become assimilated to the Divine image and rise to the destined perfection of our being. Have you, Christians, experienced this sanctifying grace? If this is the case you will be shocked at the criminality of many things which you once regarded with indifference; your moral feelings

will be quick and powerful; your low attainments in virtue will fill you with grief and shame; and your object in attending on the Lord's Supper will be to derive new influence from His death, in the advancement of His glory and in the fulfilment of His will.

Contemplate with suitable emotions the amazing scene before you. The heart of the dead Saviour is to you a fountain of life. That heart is now laid open, it is the last discovery which is made of it before it is committed to the tomb, and you see that it is full of grace and truth. Often had it melted, and sorrowed, and groaned for you; now it weeps and bleeds, and still it is for you. Let your minds be filled with wonder at His grace, who, having loved His own in the world, loved them to the end, and made even His breathless body to suggest to you the lessons and the blessings of grace and consolation. The cross of Christ was a tree of life, and its healing balm drops without ceasing.

Your indignation is glowing against this ruffian soldier: direct it against the evil passions of your own hearts. You have wounded Christ in the house of His friends by your folly and carnality, and there are aggravations in your conduct which are not to be found in that of this man. You are conscious of Christ's innocence and dignity, which he was not; you have received proofs of regard which he did not, and have given pledges of serving Him which he never made. Let such thoughts humble you. Look to Him whom you have pierced, and mourn for Him. Say not, 'I cannot look to Him, for I am unable to bear the frown of anger and abhorrence with which He must survey a wretch like me;' but you forget that 'He waits to be gracious, and takes pleasure in them that hope in His mercy.' When we turn our eyes to one whom we have injured, we may find him implacable. There may be something in his face which tells us more decidedly than can be done by words, that he can never forgive us; but when the penitent soul looks to Jesus, there is a mildness and a pity in His countenance which assures us that all is forgiven, and that it is His glory and His delight to save us. O generous Redeemer, it shall be my delight to love Thee and to serve Thee, and my grief while I live that I have offended Thee so often and hated Thee so long. There is no frown on His face, and on His lips no sentence of exclusion from His presence and mercy. It is less injurious to Him to question His almighty power than to distrust the riches of His grace or the tenderness of His compassion.

Implore clearer discoveries of the sufficiency and merit of the sacrifice of your Lord, and beseech Him to give you a pledge that peace has been made by the blood of the cross, in His saying to you, 'I am pacified to you for all that you have done.' O how delightful is it to hear the Father, whom we have offended, declaring Himself reconciled to us, and the greatest and best of beings assuring us that He will be our God for ever! What a privilege is it to be thus warranted to hope that peace shall attend us in all the circumstances of our lot, to calm our minds in the storm of affliction, to sustain us in meek composure in our intercourse with unreasonable men, and to fortify us against the terrors of judgment!

Implore increasing measures of sanctifying grace, and beseech Him to fulfil to you His gracious promise, 'Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you,' and arise from this solemn scene to carry into practice the virtuous resolutions which you have now formed. Let young disciples beware of everything which tends to lessen the sensibility of conscience, or to taint purity of manners, and let them uniformly maintain the self-denial and the circumspection of prudence and sobriety. Let those in middle life take heed lest at any time their hearts are overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness and the cares of this life; and let not the failing eye of age look back with favour on any of the pollutions of this world, or its declining days be made miserable by what is especially in them a foolish solicitude.

Trust in God that whatever evil men may be permitted to do to you or to yours, it shall be made subservient to His glory, to your own good, and to that of others. The stroke which endangers your health, the calumny which blackens your name, the artifice which alienates your friends, and the injustice which wrests your property from you, shall yield to you and to others the peaceable fruits of righteousness, if you suffer like Christians. And, remembering what the body of your Lord was subject to in death and after it, fret not because yours must be wasted and broken by disease, and at last covered with worms and clods of dust. Let it be your desire that while it remains unburied, the sight of it may suggest to your family the vanity of every earthly confidence, and the necessity of immediate preparation for eternity, and that in its coffin and in its grave, your flesh may rest in hope that this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and that what was sown in dishonour shall be raised in glory. Amen.

ADDRESS LXXIV.

Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, and the napkin, that was about His head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed.—JOHN xx. 3-8.

THE visit paid by these two disciples to the tomb of Jesus, suggests to you, Christians, much suitable instruction, and is related in a way which admirably corresponds with the views previously given us in the Gospel history of their character.

Peter seems, on this occasion, to have discovered no symptoms of that terror, which, in the hall of the high priest, led him so basely to deny his Master, but shines forth in all the usual boldness and ardour of his spirit. His approach to the sepulchre was not without danger, for he had reason to suppose that he might be discovered there by some of those who had suspected his connection with Jesus; and that they would show little mercy to him now, when he was proving by his conduct the falsehood of his declaration, 'I know not the man;' yet he went forward, yea, such was his eagerness, that he ran to the sepulchre.

Peter's heart must have melted within him, with strong emotion, when he thought of seeing the corpse of his Lord and the place where it lay. Ah! that eye is closed in death, whose look expressed to my heart a reproof so striking and pity so tender. Death hath now sealed up those ears which conveyed to His heart the sounds of my denial—sounds which were to it like the piercings of a sword. No longer shall my kind Monitor warn me of the danger to which I expose myself by my rashness and folly. Oh that I had heard from His lips, ere He went to the house of silence, the assurance of forgiveness! Can I bear the thought that indignation and horror at my base conduct were the last feelings of His heart?

The surprise which Peter felt when he found the tomb empty of all except the grave-clothes, would call up a new train of feelings. Have His enemies removed His body to subject it to new indignities? Or hath His Father buried it, as He did the body of Moses, in some secret place, lest misguided vene-

ration should pour over this spot idolatrous honours, or lest horrid cruelty should mangle in its triumphs the corpse of Him whom it hated even in death?

Christians, ye are not come this day to the grave where Jesus lay—‘He is not there, He is risen as He said’—but to the table where He sits. Come with the earnestness, the fortitude, and the repentance of Peter; and hear the voice which invites those who have fallen like him, ‘Return, O backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings.’ Peter thought that he would find the face of his Lord covered, or if uncovered, that it would be pale and ghastly; but you shall see on it the power of an endless life, and the kindness of everlasting mercy.

John came with Peter on this occasion, nay, he appears to have reached the sepulchre before him, yet went not in, till encouraged by the boldness of his fellow-disciple, who searched every corner of the tomb with care. It is not difficult to conjecture what were John’s feelings in coming to our Lord’s grave. Cold is that bosom on which it was my peculiar privilege to lean. His heart no more meets mine. No more is His left hand under my head; no more doth His right hand embrace me. The disciple whom Jesus loved is the title with which He honoured me, and which shall be graven on my breast; but ah! death hath broken that heart to me so affectionate. ‘I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord, in the land of the living.’

O ye who, like John, love the Saviour fervently; O ye who are complaining of the weakness of your affection to Jesus, and who are wishing that you could love Him with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind; you are now on a spot where His love hath often been shed abroad in the heart; where He hath clasped the pious in His arms, and pressed them to His bosom; and where He hath said, ‘Fear not, I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell and of death.’ These two disciples did not find Jesus in the tomb; but we cannot doubt His presence in this place when such are His words, ‘I am come into My garden, My sister, My spouse;’ I am come to receive the homage of devotion, and to reward it with the blessings of My love.

Interesting were the objects which these disciples saw in the tomb of our Lord. They saw the linen clothes lying, and the napkin that was about His head wrapped together in a place by itself. How forcibly do these circumstances proclaim the calmness and the majesty with which our Lord left the sepulchre! The shroud and the robes of death are objects un-

pleasant to nature. The heart sinks when we see them wrapped about others, and when we think on them as preparing for ourselves. But remember that Jesus Christ wore the garments of the grave. Around that body in which Divine excellence dwelt, they were wrapped. Around that head, which was as the most fine gold, that napkin was bound. Where insulting cruelty had fixed the crown of thorns, sorrowing, respectful friendship placed this napkin; and that head, which, in the retreat of devotion, had often been filled with the dews of the night, was cold and silent, like the stone on which it lay.

Christ laid those garments of the grave aside. He wore them but a short time; you must wear them longer. He laid them aside by His own power; from you they shall be stripped off by the hand of corruption. But to you it shall be said in due time, 'Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Sion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem.' Christ hath left something behind Him in the grave, as a token that He hath been there. He has left that napkin to intimate how tenderly He will bind the aching head of sorrow; and these clothes, to assure us that the fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of saints, shall be ours.

Put on, Christians, the humility, self-denial, and superiority to the world, in which Jesus lived and died, and to you these words shall be accomplished, 'Thou hast a few names, even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments; they shall walk with Me in white.' Let me have as little confidence in my own attainments, as I shall feel in that hour when death shall summon me to judgment; and let me be as much convinced of the vanity of the world, as I shall be at the moment when I am quitting it for ever.

Depart from the communion table, as Peter went from the tomb, 'wondering in himself at that which was come to pass,' at the body being taken away, and the clothes remaining. But have not you more sublime objects of admiration in what you have seen and heard in the purchase of redemption, and in the application of it to your souls? 'Marvellous, O Lord, are Thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well.' His name shall be called Wonderful. Awake, my dull heart, to admiration more exalted, and to praise more glowing. Let not your admiration incite you to fanciful, presumptuous, and idle speculation; but to inquiry directed by the light which shines in a dark place, guarded by humility, and breathing in prayer.

Depart from the communion table as John retired, in the spirit of faith; for of him it is said, that when he went in to the sepulchre, he saw and believed. He believed that his Lord

was risen, and O, what joy and peace would not that yield to his mind, like the calm of the ocean to the seaman who has been tossed with tempests! And after a scene so much adapted to confirm your faith, and after being sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, shall you go away full of doubts and fears? Let not your faith be shaken by temptation, nor by the cunning craftiness of those who lie in wait to deceive. 'Add to your faith virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity.' With such a lovely train, faith will shine before men to its own honour, and to the delight of Him who is its Author and Finisher. Before such a scene, the man whose faith is without works will be put to shame; and those who are most unfriendly to the belief of the Gospel, may be constrained to admit that the brightest excellence of character originates in its influence. Joy and peace must accompany such believing; and its certain issue shall be, 'your receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.'

When you visit the graves of your friends, and looking, in imagination, beneath the stone, or the turf, the dust, and the boards laid over them, find them covered with worms, rejoice in hope that the time will come when they shall quit these dark abodes, and leave every trace of mortality and corruption behind them. Where you stretched the shroud of death, Jesus shall spread the robe of immortality; where you fixed the napkin, He will place the crown; and where you wept, He will triumph. 'Comfort one another with these words.'

ADDRESS LXXV.

Jesus saith unto her, Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father: but go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God.—JOHN xx. 17.

It is no uncommon thing to see a mourner weeping at a grave. It is there that nature asserts its power over the heart, and there friendship, taking its last farewell, drops the tear that flows from the meltings of love and sorrow. But what an interesting mourner is now presented to your view! Mary stands at the tomb of Jesus, and weeps; she stoops down to look at the place where her Lord had been laid, and beholds in it two angels in white. This garb was emblematical of their purity; and as this was the colour of garments worn in scenes and on

days of rejoicing, it was an intimation that the Saviour had triumphed, and that what had made angels so happy was no cause of alarm or despair to her.

How instructive was the posture of these angels ! The one was at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. Angels had ministered to our Lord at the commencement of His course in Bethlehem, and at the consummation of all things they shall attend Him in their glory. They minister to Christ the head, but they disdain not to befriend the obscurest member of His body. The head is as the most fine gold, and the feet are clay, yet they minister to both.

But, like the cherubim stationed on each end of the mercy-seat, this position of the angels might intimate that through Christ alone we have peace with God, and access into that grace in which believers stand. After man had fallen he was driven from paradise, and the Lord placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword, which turned every way, to guard the path to the tree of life. But when man was redeemed by the obedience of the second Adam, angels were placed in the tomb with the olive branch in their hands, and the voice of welcome in their mouths, 'Come, see the place where the Lord lay.' None of the guards or of the enemies of our Lord durst enter the tomb, but pious affection is invited to contemplate the trophies of His victory and the place of His rest. While thus employed ye are animated to sing, 'The Lord lives, blessed be my rock, and let the God of my salvation be exalted.' Mary was in too dark and perplexed a state to understand such intimations, and she refused to be comforted till Jesus at once shed light, peace, and joy over her mind by a single word. And to you He saith, 'Fear not, I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by My name; thou art Mine.' Your name He will confess before His Father, and it shall never be blotted from the book of life. Mary, on recognizing His voice, turned herself, and said unto Him, 'Rabboni, that is, Master.' The rapture which she felt was mingled with holy awe; and she thought it more becoming to express the homage she owed Him than her transport. And are you addressing Him in such language as this, 'Thou great Apostle of our profession, I will keep Thy sayings in my heart, and take Thy statutes as my heritage for ever. I will glory in Thy Gospel as the perfection of wisdom, and bear my testimony to it as all my salvation. My gracious Lord, I am Thy servant; fill me with holy ardour in Thy service, and enable me to glorify Thee with my body and spirit, which are Thine.' He

listens with complacency to such language, and will speak peace to your hearts in return.

The act with which Mary accompanied this address calls for your imitation. You are allowed not only to touch the Saviour by the hand of faith and love, but to lean on Him; and this is permitted not merely for a moment, but during the whole of your pilgrimage. 'Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness leaning upon her Beloved?' How safe and how happy is the soul while it leans on the Saviour.

Be ready to communicate for the benefit of others your delightful views of your ascended Lord. Mary came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her. Your Christian experience may give a devout tendency to the affections and pursuits of your friends, and may be of great use to those who are walking in darkness. It may revive that hope which seems to be giving up the ghost, and bring back that joy which they imagined would never return; it may encourage the dying to trust in the Saviour's mercy, and make the scoffer know assuredly that God hath made that Jesus whom they oppose Lord of all.

Let your garments be always white, and keep yourselves unspotted from the world. Think it not enough to avoid what, in the judgment of the world, would be a blemish to the character, but everything which the voice of conscience and the Word of God warn you to shun. Imitate the angels in their ministrations. Give to Jesus, who is the Head of the body, the Church, the glory that is due, and on Him let the blessings of your hearts come. And condescend to them of low degree. Angels came into the dark abode of death to minister to Him; and you must not refuse to go into the mean dwelling of sick poverty, nor count yourselves degraded in joining the humble mourners, who carry the poor saint to his grave. The meaner the place is where charity ministers, the more lovely does she appear in His eyes whose spirit she breathes.

How animating is this scene in the prospect of death! The presence of the angels in white in the sepulchre attests that its nature is changed. If we view it by the eye of faith, we will perceive kindness in its summons, mercy in its stroke, and a home of peace and rest in its dark abode. When you think of the body in the grave corrupting in its shroud, anticipate the time when angels shall come and call it forth to immortality. Think not that you are too mean and obscure to hope for a resurrection, for 'of all that the Father hath given Him He

shall lose nothing, but shall raise it up at the last day.' Then angels shall descend with the trump of God in their hands; and wherever the dead are lying, they shall hear its sound, and shall come forth. And when the dead in Christ arise, 'they shall be caught up to the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we be for ever with the Lord.'

ADDRESS LXXVI.

Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side: and be not faithless, but believing.—JOHN xx. 27.

THESE gracious words of our Lord to Thomas, He now addresses, Christians, to you. Very different language did Thomas deserve; and very different language do you deserve for stubborn unbelief and insensibility. Jesus might have said, I have seen, with indignation, the incredulity which set at nought my repeated assurances of the certainty of My resurrection, and which sullenly repelled the testimony of thy fellow-disciples as an idle fable. Behold in My face the frown of determined abhorrence, and in My hand the glittering sword whetted for thy destruction! Instead of this, He speaks to him in the most indulgent language of pity and of love. Too often, Christians, have you questioned the testimony of your Lord, and doubted the constancy of His love; yet He calls you to a scene where He lays open all His heart, that you may be filled with joy and peace in believing.

Behold, Christians, in your Saviour's hands and feet, the reality and the painfulness of His sufferings. His groans were not the groans of a fictitious sorrow; they arose from sufferings of the most agonizing kind. The hands which had been so often stretched out to a disobedient and gainsaying people, were expanded on the cross, and fixed to it by large nails. And can this be the treatment of hands which had wiped so many cheeks of sorrow, and raised so many fallen? Those feet which had gone about doing good, were fastened to the cross by nails also; and thus suspended, He hung in the severest torture for hours.

Behold in your Saviour's side the certainty of His death! Had He been alive when the spear of the soldier was thrust into His side, He must have died of that wound; but ere that outrage was committed on His body, His breath had gone forth. The object of His mission could not have been accomplished, nor His people saved, nor His triumph completed, with-

out dying. That pale face you contemplate, not with pity only, but with exultation. Your hope expires not with Him; it springs up from the spot where the last drops of His blood fell. My hope flourishes, for it is Christ that died.

Behold in Christ's hands and side the certainty of His resurrection! He who now sits on the throne, is the same Jesus who once suffered on the cross. It is no pretender to the character of Christ, but the same meek and gracious Saviour. And if His body be the same, can there be a change in His heart? Is that gentleness gone, which rendered His deportment so encouraging to the feeble and the timid? Is that tenderness gone, to which sorrow never appealed in vain? No. 'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.'

Behold, in your Saviour's hands and side, a proof that He is not ashamed of His sufferings for you! The warrior returning home in triumph from the field of battle, glories in showing the scars of his wounds. These he considers as tokens that his laurels were fully earned, and that he deserves the plaudits of his country. Jesus delights in the memorials of His sufferings, as testimonies that, though the struggle was arduous, His zeal and His courage bore Him through with glory. On these memorials of His sufferings the blessed spirits of heaven look, and exclaim, 'Thy right hand, O Lord, is glorious in power; Thy right hand hath dashed in pieces the enemy.'

Behold, in your Saviour's hands and side, the memorials of suffering, which He presents in His intercession. 'I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne, stood a Lamb as it had been slain.' And can such an Intercessor be disregarded? Can such arguments in prayer fail to influence the Judge of all? 'The blood of sprinkling speaketh better things than the blood of Abel.' How consoling is its sound to the desponding heart! and how resistless is its eloquence in the court of heaven! It is infinitely more precious to God, than all the tears that ever dropped in penitence, and than all the blood that ever flowed in martyrdom.

Now, Christians, are your looks and your hearts fixed on the hands and side of a crucified Lord? No object can be found which hath such claims on my attention as this; and to look and love, to admire and adore, must be my employment now, and shall be my employment for ever!

Behold, in your Saviour's hands and side, the reality and the strength of His love. It was not a love in word and in tongue, but a love demonstrated by the most astonishing deeds, and shown to be perfect in sufferings. Have any of you

laboured under acute and lingering diseases, during which a beloved friend watched over you, and soothed you like a ministering angel? With what interest do you not contemplate the effects of anxiety, and of the want of rest and of food, on their bodies? The pale countenance, the sunk eye, and the emaciated body, show what their care of you hath been, and what it has cost them. And doth not gratitude swell the heart, and vow that their kindness shall never be forgotten? Let such be your feelings when you contemplate these evidences, that Christ loved you, and gave Himself for you.

Behold, in your Lord's hands and side, bodily pain sanctified and mitigated for you. When disease shall attack your limbs, and oppress your hearts; and when acute pain shall be like a sword in your bones,—think on the nails piercing through our Lord's hands and feet, and you will learn to suffer without a murmur, nay, to glory in tribulation, saying, 'I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.' Into these wounds He will drop a healing balm. Alas! into His own none was poured; yea, at the very period when He was thus tortured, 'the arrows of the Almighty stuck fast within Him, the poison of which drunk up His spirit.' 'He will make you to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which He hath broken may rejoice.'

Behold, in your Saviour's hands and side, the most powerful reasons why you should no more grieve Him by your sins. What are these wounds, these additional wounds, in thine hands? 'They are the wounds which I have received in the house of My friends.' Are the wounds in My hands so small, that you must increase their number, or enlarge their extent? Is the gash in My side too slight an evidence of My patience, that I must permit you to pierce Me to the heart? Lord, I cannot bear the thought of offending Thee any more. 'I will keep Thy statutes; O forsake me not utterly!'

Behold, in your Saviour's hands and side, the most powerful reasons against unbelief. Can you doubt either His willingness or His power to save? If He had not been willing to save, He would not have died. If He had not been mighty to save, could He have risen from the dead? 'Fear not, only believe.' What is that state of mind, by which your own tranquillity will be most fully secured, and the honour of your Redeemer most effectually promoted? It is this, 'strong in the faith.'

Behold, in your Saviour's hands and side, the most animating motives to the most painful duties of mortification. 'If thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee; it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into everlasting

fire.' Shall the blessed body of Jesus be mangled, and the cursed body of death be spared? Indulgence to sin is indignity to your Lord, and cruelty to yourselves.

Behold, in your Saviour's hands and side, a pledge that death shall not do you any real injury. You may count his darts as stubble, and laugh at the shaking of his spear. Christ's hands and feet were pierced, that the 'weak hands might be strengthened, and the feeble knees confirmed.' You may have reason to say with Job, in the hour of death, 'I was at ease, but He hath broken me asunder. His archers compass me round about; He cleaveth my reins asunder, and doth not spare; He poureth out my gall upon the ground;' but the remembrance of Christ's wounds will quell the risings of impatience, and suggest the delightful hope, 'He hath torn, and He will heal us; He hath smitten, and He will bind us up; He will revive us, and we shall live in His sight.'

Behold, in Christ's hands and side, a pledge that the same bodies which you now have shall be raised again. The face which compassion softened, and where benevolence shone, shall again attract the eye of friendship. The hands which have ministered to the wants of sorrow, shall wave the palm of victory, and grasp the feet of the King of Glory. O how precious is this hope to him whose heart cannot leave the grave! The insensate clay, which you saw gathering blackness, you shall behold shining with the splendours of immortality, and all its pulses throbbing with kindness and with rapture. And while memory searches out the traces of the cruelty of enemies, and of the workings of grace; when of the penitent's cheek she says, here the tears of contrition flowed, and of the confessor's forehead, here the brand of infamy, for the name of Jesus, was fixed,—it will serve to enhance their beauty, and to heighten their glory.

Now, since objects so wonderful and so affecting are to be seen here, let them have your constant attention and your unwearied regard; let them influence every act of devotion, and let them animate the whole obedience of life.

ADDRESS LXXVII.

He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?

JOHN xxi. 17.

OUR Lord's continuance on earth for a season with His disciples, after His resurrection, and the affectionate intercourse

which He maintained with them, were ordained of heaven for the most important purposes. We have known men, who, when their calamities were over, have punished with severity all who had forsaken them, or slighted them, in the day of their affliction. And hath Christ risen from the dead to take vengeance on the disciples who abandoned Him, or the familiar friend who denied Him? No! He comes from the tomb with a heart glowing with love and pity. Unaltered by the pains of death, and by the felicities of paradise, and loving His own that were in the world to the end, He saw them frequently, during forty days, and gave them various assurances of His generous forgiveness and complacency. His behaviour to Peter gives us a view of His heart that is peculiarly delightful; and, on His inquiries respecting his love, you may meditate with profit at the altar of God.

But why did Jesus inquire respecting Peter's love to Him, rather than after any other grace? Peter's conduct had made his love to his Master peculiarly questionable. The omniscient Redeemer knew the state of Peter's heart; but to his fellow-disciples, and to the world around, his behaviour must have suggested such unfavourable conclusions as these with regard to him. Can he love Christ, who disowned Him in the depth of His affliction; who, to the insults of His enemies, added the treachery of a friend; who followed Him into the high priest's hall to render the denial more open, and sealed it with blasphemies to gain it credit? This forward plant, which seemed to overtop every other, had no proper root, and is now withering away. But by our Lord's questions, and the answers given to them, He meant to lead the disciples to more charitable ideas of their humbled associate; and to show them, that the plant which they thought twice dead, would rise, and flourish like the cedar trees beside the waters.

Peter had been professing penitence for his crime. Our Lord wished to show, by this question, that his anguish arose, not from a sense of shame merely, nor from an apprehension of the vengeance of his offended Master, but from a more generous principle. I have wounded the bosom that cherished me, and renounced connection with Him at whose side I ought to have counted it my glory to die. Peter's tears flowed not so much from this idea, What will my brethren think of me? but from this thought, The best of Masters must abhor me as a traitor: I am a deserved outcast from the kindest of hearts. We read of the faith of devils, and of the sorrows of the damned; but in none of them do we find the faith or the penitence which works by love. The penitent clasps the feet on which his tears

are falling ; and his expressions of holy admiration of the Saviour mingle with the language of self-aborrence.

Love was a grace peculiarly necessary for Peter, in the great work in which he was now to be employed. He had services to perform, and dangers to brave, which would appear intolerable to every heart where love to Jesus did not reign. Christian love hath braved the dungeon and the scaffold, and all that the world holds dear it has laid down at the Saviour's feet.

But why does our Lord put this question to Peter three times ? When we repeat a question, it is either when we do not understand, or are not satisfied with the answer which is given ; but Peter's reply was so modest, so simple, and so sincere, that it was most pleasing to our Saviour. Our Lord said to him, the third time, Lovest thou Me, to impress him more strongly with his threefold denial of Him. Peter, by this, was led to think, My Master remembers my unworthy conduct ; but it is neither to upbraid me with it, nor to punish me for it. It is to show me how much He can forgive, and that I, having so much forgiven me, should love much. Our Lord repeated this question a third time for our sakes, to show us that we are not to be easily satisfied with the appearances of religious affection, but are thoroughly to search our hearts, and to try our ways.

The questions which our Lord put to Peter, He now proposes to you. They are put to every heart, and every heart must answer them. It is not every answer which will please Him ; and the inquiry He will not allow to be trifled with, nor evaded. What a variety of answers do I hear given to these questions from the communion table ! One disciple says, Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee. The witness of the Spirit with mine, is so clear and decided, that I think I can appeal to the omniscient God Himself, that my love is sincere. To Him my heart cleaves : I can take an interest in nothing unconnected with Him ; and my soul counts Him its all.

I hear another disciple saying, I wish to love Jesus, though I dare not say that I do so. Had I my wish, every thought of mine would fix on Him ; every expression would magnify Him ; and every moment would be devoted to Him. Oh that I had a heart where He reigned unrivalled, and a life sacred to His glory and to His laws !

But another disciple says, in a voice which indicates timidity and hesitation, I am so perplexed and confounded with doubts and fears, that I cannot speak either of my attainments or my wishes. The consciousness of my guilt and folly makes

me dumb. I am so troubled, that I cannot answer. But love to Jesus breathes in that sigh, shines in that blush, and weeps in that tear. 'To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at My word.'

Our Lord's three questions to Peter, show us, that to love Him is the principal thing in religion. 'The end of the commandment is charity.' Without love, the most splendid gifts will be but like the decorations of a corpse, which are forgotten amidst the ghastliness of its features, and the noisomeness of advancing corruption. Without love to Christ, praise is but the flattery of the lips, and obedience the reluctant drudgery of the slave. But where love operates, the lip of praise is touched with a live coal from the altar, and keeping His commandments is regarded as the whole duty of man. Where love is wanting, in vain will you seek for the faith that hath seen the Redeemer's glory, or for the repentance which mourns for Him. There is no grace in religion which is not animated, and guided in its exercise by love. Patience, is love kissing the rod. Resignation, is love meekly receiving the cup of sorrow from a Father's hand. Repentance, is love washing the feet of Jesus with tears. Joy, is love happy in its object. Zeal, is its holy ardour, and gentleness its soft impression. Some represent religion as a mere exercise of the powers of the understanding, but it is the heart which Jesus claims; and the speculation which leaves it uninterested, is like the beam which makes the snow more dazzling, but reaches not the plants that lie dead beneath it. Let no idle dread of enthusiasm, and no vain boastings of a rational religion, ever induce you to look with pleasure on any system where Christ is kept from the heart, and in which love to Him is not held forth as all in all.

Ye disciples of Jesus, let your love to Him abound. Consider how well He deserves your supreme affection. In Him, every perfection which characterises the Godhead, and every grace that can adorn humanity, shine. Ye who are dazzled with the pomp of majesty, come and see Him who is the brightness of the Father's glory. Ye who are charmed with the smile of benignity, and the meltings of compassion, come and see Him who delighteth in mercy. Come and study a character, in which there is wisdom without one error, holiness without a stain, patience without a murmur, goodness ever active, and mercies ever new. I read His claims to my love in the lessons which He hath taught, so elevating to the mind, and so improving to its best principles; and in the laws which He has given, which have restrained me from the crimes to which temp-

tation prompted me, and have kept the sons of wickedness from attacking me. I read His claims to my supreme love in every scene of His eventful life, from His birth to its close. I see love in the smiles of the babe of Bethlehem, and in the saddened countenance of the Man of Sorrows. His prayers were the wishes, and His sermons the instructions of His love. What was His agony, but the struggle, and what was His death, but the perfect work of love? Love wrought in His miracles, pleaded in His prayers, melted in His tears, and gloried in His tortures. I feel His claims to my supreme love, in the rest He hath imparted to my burdened conscience, and in the hope which anticipates the raptures of the blessed. No affection, O Jesus, can reach Thy matchless worth; and no praise can do justice to Thy excellent greatness.

Let your conduct demonstrate to the world around you, the sincerity of your love to Jesus. Let them see it in your enlightened zeal, in the purity of your manners, and in the extent of your charity. If your behaviour is stained by selfishness, by impurity, or by conformity to the world, they will either consider you as without love to Christ, or view it as a vain inoperative principle, from which no moral advantage results. 'If ye love Me,' says our Lord, 'keep My commandments.' This is the decisive test of love.

Christians, what is the degree of your love to Christ? Is it fervent and vigorous? In this third question to Peter, He changes the word translated *lovest*, in the two former, for one more strong and emphatic, implying a degree of affection more ardent and tender. He will not quench the smoking flax; He looks with complacency on the little child lisping His praise, and saying, in the first glow of religious desire, 'O God, Thou art my God, early will I seek Thee;' but it is with peculiar delight that He regards the pious man, who in heart and in conduct 'follows the Lord fully.' Grow therefore in this grace. 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy strength, and with all thy mind.' How sweetly will this encomium reward your most strenuous efforts to excel in this fruit of the Spirit! 'How fair is thy love, My sister, My spouse; how much better is thy love than wine, and the smell of thine ointment than all spices!' I trust, that at this solemn season the Redeemer has borne testimony to the sincerity and to the increase of your love to Him. How delightful is it to hear Him saying, Your affection to My name and law is stronger than it was when you last approached My altar! The love of many waxeth cold, but it is not so with yours. I hope that you have the pleasing consciousness of advancing in

love to your Redeemer, from your increasing delight in His service, and from the subjugation of evil principles and passions within you. 'Let us walk in love,' and may God prepare us for that world where every heart and where every service are His.

But the desponding soul is still urging bitter things against itself, and saying, so far from having any evidence to present of increasing affection to the Redeemer, I dare not assert that I have any love to Him whatever. I would give the world to be able to declare with truth that I love my Redeemer; but I dare not say it, lest I should be found a liar to Him. But is His Sabbath your delight? Is His word your hope? Are His saints in your hearts, to live with them, and to die with them? Are your affections detached from the world? If such is the case, your hearts have been circumcised to love Him. Are you willing to give your heart to another in preference to Him? That heart must be His, which will not, and which cannot be another's. I hear the Redeemer saying, that heart is Mine. 'Fear not, I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by My name; thou art Mine.'

The manner in which our Lord acted to Peter, teaches you how to treat the backslider who professes repentance for his fall. There may be some who have gone to the altar of God with you, who have dishonoured their profession by acts of fraud and licentiousness, and by habits of slander and profanity, and who have returned to the ways of Zion, in appearance humble and contrite. Give not hastily credit to their protestations. The frozen serpent, which unsuspecting credulity placed in its bosom, was restored to vigour only to sting its cherisher. Try them thoroughly, and mark their conduct with care. Talk not to them in the haughty tone that says, 'Stand by, for I am holier than thou.' Examine them not in a manner that indicates conviction of their insincerity. Speak to them in the charity which longs after them in the bowels of Jesus Christ, and convince them by your meekness, that their probation proceeds from no malignant jealousy, but from a vigilant regard for the honour of religion, and a benevolent anxiety about their future stability. 'Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.'

ADDRESS LXXVIII.

They took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.—Acts iv. 13.

SUCH was the impression produced on the Jewish council by the behaviour of Peter and John before them. They had expected that the majesty of the court would awe them into silence, that, if they did speak, they would be easily put to confusion by their threats and cavils, and that their defence would be the feeble and hesitating apology of perplexity and fear. But they beheld in them a courage which proceeded from the spirit of power, an energy which struck their consciences, and a wisdom with which their craft and subtlety were unable to contend. They saw in them those qualities which they had so often dreaded and envied in their Master, that they shone with His light, and pleaded with His zeal. It had been the privilege of these disciples to be for a considerable time the associates of Jesus; and such were the lessons which He had given them respecting truth and duty, and all Divine and heavenly objects; and such were the graces which He had displayed before them, that their views must have been very different from those of carnal men; the path which they pursued was far from the course of this world, and the temper that influenced them was quite opposite to its spirit. Such was the result of their being with Jesus.

But this is the privilege of good men in all ages. We cannot indeed be with Him in the way in which His companions on earth were, but saints are with Him when He condescends to visit them, and to maintain fellowship with them. There are various promises of the word of God in which good men are taught to expect, and to prepare for, His gracious presence. 'If any man love Me, he will keep My words, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him.' 'Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.' It is not the number, but the piety of His worshippers, which attracts His presence.

The offices which Jesus sustains, suggest arguments to prove the reality of this fellowship. He is their friend, and He will visit them with the proofs of His care and regard; He is their counsellor, and He will direct their steps; and He is their physician, and He will bind up their wounds. To Him is committed the care of their interests, the supply of their wants, and the culture of their graces; and this requires His presence and continued influence. And the experience of good men in

various scenes attests the reality of this privilege. In the scene of danger and suffering, He hath been with them to support their courage and to ensure their safety ; in the season of temptation, He has enabled them to avoid its snares and to resist its assaults ; in the hour of solitude, they have felt that they were not alone, for Jesus was with them ; on the bed of sickness, they have enjoyed His soothing pity and effectual support, and in the ordinances of His grace they have seen the beauty of the Lord, while they inquired in His temple.

In the ordinance of the Lord's Supper He is peculiarly present with His disciples. It is at such a scene that 'He brings them into His banqueting house, and that His banner over them is love.' Ye know this from your past, and, may I add, from your present experience ; and, if this is the case, you feel how love burns, how hope is animated, how griefs and fears are forgotten, and how joy abounds in His presence. You have felt pleasure in the society of the wise who could instruct you, the good who could soothe you, and the friends who loved you ; but communion with Jesus now can be equalled and exceeded only by the bliss of heaven. There are evils which human sympathy cannot alleviate, and difficulties in which earthly wisdom cannot guide ; but Jesus can make darkness light before us, and comfort against grief on every side.

The Scriptures record many delightful testimonies to the reality and sweetness of communion with Jesus, and these testimonies are not the language of the weak and the credulous, of persons of strong imaginations and ardent tempers ; but of men the most remote from anything like folly or presumption. The object which they had in view, in detailing their high privilege, was not to gratify their own vanity, or to secure their dominion over the faith of others, by teaching them to regard them as the special favourites of heaven ; but to honour the grace of Jesus, and to encourage others to seek the happiness of piety.

It belongs to your Lord to determine the place where His presence is to be enjoyed, the season of this fellowship, and the degree in which His saints shall be conscious of it. Wherever the place is, they may be assured that none of its confusions shall be permitted to disturb their tranquillity, and that its miseries shall not drive Him away. If they are with Him but for a moment, they feel that it becomes not them to complain, who deserved the blackness of darkness for ever, and who hope to spend eternity in His immediate presence. Nay, you ought not to repine that you behold Him darkly as through a glass,

and hear but a few whispers of His voice ; for even of this you are unworthy ; and that world is before you, where you shall see as you are seen, and know Him even as you are known.

You have heard the solemn injunction, 'Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel,' and I trust that those who are now favoured with His presence, are exciting every faculty of their souls, and every affection of their hearts, to magnify His name ; and let those who long for His arrival, but to whom He hath not yet appeared, observe the indications of His approach. 'It is the voice of my beloved, behold He cometh.' I am certain there is not one that knows how to value and improve this privilege, but will say with Jacob, 'I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me.'

Now, what is the temper and conduct by which you will make it manifest that you have been with Jesus? It is well known how ready we are to imbibe the spirit and to adopt the manners of those to whom we are strongly attached, and with whom we frequently associate. Even where the imitation was not intended, we slide into it insensibly. Now, intercourse with the Saviour produces conformity to His image ; and as the man who has been handling perfumes will carry a fragrant scent with him wherever he goes, so he who has been with his Lord will manifest the savour of His name in every place.

Superiority to the world will evince your communion with Jesus. Such beauties are seen in the Saviour's character, that the eye which has been gazing on them turns with disgust from the world's attractions. Good men discern such a value in His salvation, that the possession of it forms the grand object of their pursuit ; and such a certainty and preciousness do they perceive in His promises, that the most flattering prospects of the world appear to them as idle dreams. In order to learn this superiority to the world, we need not repair to the schools of heathen philosophy, or to the cells of monkery, to get our minds perverted or our hearts deadened by the unnatural apathy of the one, or the gloomy austerities of the other ; but let us go to the feet of Jesus. I call on you who are now with Him to seek more earnestly the things which are above, and to show that His voice has closed your ears to the world's flatteries, and His glory your eyes to its vain show.

Tenderness of conscience and circumspection of conduct will also make it evident that you have been with Jesus. In communion with Him you have the liveliest impressions of the purity of His nature ; and such seems the importance of His favour, and such the beauty of His unspotted rectitude, that it

becomes the most earnest wish of His people to avoid everything which would displease Him. Indulgences which seem to others excusable, you must carefully shun ; and omissions which to others appear to be without blame, you must avoid as indications of ingratitude to Christ and indifference to your duty. This moral delicacy and caution are quite different from the scrupulosity of hypocrites. They are scrupulous only in matters of trivial moment, and their austerity is accompanied with bitter reflections on those who are less reserved than they are ; but the circumspection and self-denial of the pious are always accompanied with mildness and liberality in their judgment of others. See that you abstain from every appearance of evil. How soon does the canker which has smitten one leaf spread over the whole plant ! ‘Happy is the man that feareth alway.’

Humility will show that you have been with Jesus. It has been often asserted that the idea of communion with the Deity tends to puff men up with pride ; but the vision of the Saviour’s glory must produce an affecting impression of our own vileness ; and the reception of His favours will make us feel more strongly how unworthy we are. Does Jesus visit a heart so corrupted, and shall that heart be haughty ? When we behold good men meek and lowly in circumstances where others would be haughty and insolent ; when we see them rejoicing in the attainments of others, although they throw theirs into the shade ; when their deportment in prosperity proves that they speak the truth, when they say, ‘I am not worthy of the least of Thy mercies ;’ and when their behaviour in adversity shows that they feel the necessity of God’s chastening rod, and welcome it as a blessing, we feel that they have learned from the presence and the example of Jesus to walk humbly with their God. ‘Be clothed with humility.’

Kindness and charity result from fellowship with the Saviour. The scenes which are then reviewed, and the blessings which are bestowed, excite the liveliest impressions of His love to men ; and the heart affected with His grace must melt in compassion and charity, and the various efforts of beneficence required by the miseries of our fellow-creatures, appear a reasonable and delightful service. When we see a good man visiting the fatherless and widows in their affliction, protecting the helpless and the oppressed, enlightening the ignorant, and comforting the mourner, we are convinced that his is a heart which the love of Christ hath touched. I call on you, Christians, to do good and to communicate, and let the devotions of this scene be followed by your alms. The hour will come when

the pursuits of ambition will be deplored, and when the gains of avarice will be felt as a load on the heart; but your works of love, which have been a blessing to others, will awaken sweet reflections in your own souls. I shall only add, that by boldness in the cause of Jesus, it will be manifest that you have been with Him. Such is the impression which is produced of His excellence; and so generous and steadfast was His love, that you feel that to desert Him would be the greatest baseness and folly, and that you are bound to employ every talent which you possess for His glory. You have marked the interest which Jesus takes in His cause, and His power to support it, and must be sensible that the opposition of its enemies is but the puny effort of impotent malignity. You have heard Him express His approbation of the zeal you may have already shown, and seen Him pointing to the rewards prepared for the faithful on high; and such circumstances as these will surely make you valiant for the truth, and induce you to hold fast the profession of your faith without wavering.

Consider how honourable it is to the Saviour when His spirit is seen operating in His followers; and if these qualities be so amiable in His disciples, what must they be in their great original! If the mild lustre produced by the moon walking in her brightness on the calm surface of the ocean, raises our admiration of the splendour of the planet which God hath appointed to rule the night; if we trace with delight the features and virtues of excellent parents in their children, the graces of His followers should remind us of Him whose image they bear, and call forth our homage to Him who is the brightness of the Father's glory. And it will be most honourable to yourselves to be thus characterized as the disciples and companions of Him who is the Holy One. Beware of bringing the least stain on your high vocation, and 'let your light so shine before men, that others, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father who is in heaven. And rejoice in hope of that state where you shall be for ever with the Lord, and where perfect communion shall produce a perfect resemblance betwixt you, and where you shall be like Him, for you shall see Him as He is. With such a hope, how pleasant is the way of holiness, and how bright is the vale of death!

ADDRESS LXXIX.

Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

ACTS xi. 18.

SUCH was the acknowledgment made by the Jewish converts, when they were convinced that it was the will of heaven that the blessings and the spirit of true religion were now to be diffused among the nations. It may well appear to us both interesting and surprising, that God should grant repentance to the Gentiles.

Consider the state of the Gentiles under the former dispensation. During that period, the Jews only were favoured with a revelation of the will of God. They had a law given them, by which was the knowledge of sin. They had a variety of sacrifices, which pointed out their guilt, and the expiation of it in the blood of the Lamb. They had messengers of the Lord in succession, who called them to repentance. But in what situation were the Gentiles? They had, indeed, reason and conscience; but reason was often perverted by a sophistry which confounded all moral distinctions, and conscience was stupefied by corrupting principles, and by the licentious indulgence of the passions. The idols whom they worshipped were of such a description, that it was utterly impossible they could feel any proper compunction for having offended them. The bleeding sacrifice was the substitute for sorrow. Many of those actions which revelation teaches us to abhor, they deemed innocent, calling for no contrition, and attaching no blame. How delightful is it to think, that the day-spring from on high hath arisen on such gross darkness; and that nations so long afar off, are now brought nigh by the blood of Jesus! 'God is the Lord, who hath made light to arise to us. Bind the sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar.'

Consider the multitudes to whom this blessing of repentance is now extended. It was not opened at the death of Christ to one Gentile tribe, but to all the world. Such was the will of our blessed Saviour before He left this earth, that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations. This gift was to be made known, not to tribes merely that were civilized and polished by the culture of the arts and sciences, but to the most barbarous hordes, whose only abode was the hut or the cave, and whose only employment was war or the chase. It was to be granted, not merely to the Gentiles that bordered on Palestine, but to those who were afar off, as

well as to those who were nigh. It was to be granted to men sunk lowest in corruption, even to the chief of sinners. Where science never went to improve the character and condition of man, the Gospel is destined to go, and to make him a partaker of a divine nature. The ferocious and stubborn savage, 'the man without a tear,' whom no danger could alarm, and no intreaties could soften; who, under the most dreadful torture, never discovered the least sensibility to pain, has been made to tremble at God's word, and to repent in dust and ashes. For eighteen hundred years has this grace been spreading, and millions it hath saved. It will continue and extend its influence, 'till all the ends of the earth remember and turn to the Lord.' It will not be like the sun visiting the frozen waste of the Greenlanders for a few days, producing a scanty and shortlived verdure, and then retiring and leaving them to darkness and to the severity of the desolating blast, but it shall remain among the Gentile nations, to bring forth and to cherish the fruits of wisdom, righteousness, and peace. The multitude who stand before the throne and before the Lamb, are those whom repentance laid in the dust; and they who shout salvation, often groaned on earth in the anguish of contrition, 'Woe is me, for I am undone!'

Christians, bless God that by us in this island the ministry of repentance has been received, and that to you this grace hath been given. Divided by the sea from the continent of Europe, we were not excluded from the grace which in the primitive times was spread over it. Think of the goodness of God in the blessed Reformation. For ages, genuine repentance was lost amidst the mummeries of superstition. While men were taught that pardons could be procured by money, and that the lacerating of the body was a proper substitute for the affliction of the soul, repentance could not exist. Gloomy indolence, midnight vigils, and ridiculous austerities, were extolled as the perfection of holiness. But God saved us from these delusions. He sent the apostles of the Reformation to 'preach everywhere that men should repent.' There has been, I trust, often joy in heaven over penitents in our land; and joy in heaven over your repentance, ye disciples of Jesus.

You are come to wash Christ's feet with your tears. But is your repentance a repentance unto life? Is it such a penitence as is a sure evidence of spiritual life? There are emotions of regret for sin, which cannot be viewed as certain indications that the man who feels them is alive unto God. The shame and misery which have resulted from iniquity have made it odious to many, who never felt a pang for it as the abomin-

able thing which God hates. But the views which the true penitent has of the malignity of sin, are such as can alone result from the influences of the spirit of conviction. The care which he takes to avoid it, and the efforts which he makes to cultivate virtues the most opposite to the corrupt tendencies of his nature, show that God has been working in him, both to will and to do of His good pleasure. Is this your exercise, Christians? Do you now feel anguish for many sins which you once thought of with indifference? Is that anguish heightened by a perception of the share which they had in the sufferings of our Lord? Then is the heart of stone taken away, and the heart of flesh is given. The gushing of the waters from the rock, is a proof that it hath been smitten by Jehovah's rod. The branch bending with the weight of its clusters, shows its connection with a living and vigorous root.

Is your repentance a repentance from dead works? Have you renounced those sinful practices and habits, which indicate spiritual death, and issue in death eternal? No consideration can induce a true penitent to look on these with a favourable eye. No entreaties of acquaintances, no prospect of advantage, and no influence which they may have on the most popular characters, can reconcile him to any vices. He abstains from every appearance of evil, and thinks he cannot be too far removed from it. Repentance is the only principle of his soul which he will permit to approach it; and she goes to mark its malignity, and to blot out the gay colours in which it has been decked with her tears. Have ye, Christians, formed the resolution of Job, 'As I have done iniquity, I will do so no more?' Are you come to the table of Jesus to renew it? Is it in the spirit of the publican, when he prayed in the temple, that you have now come to the altar of God? What, O God, are Thy sacrifices? 'The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.'

Let repentance honour Jesus with its sighs and tears, its desires and its purposes, at His table; and let it glorify Him in the world by producing newness of life. Maintain habitually that abhorrence of sin, with which your hearts are now burning. Believe it, ye mourners in Zion, that repentance tends much to the true enjoyment of the present life. The sorrow of the world works death. Many have ruined their health, by the intemperance to which they have fled as a refuge from painful reflection. Often hath it produced a despair which has armed the hand with the instrument of death. Where the sorrow of the world is allowed to rage in its full sway, life is a burden, and

earth is a hell. But imagine not that the penitence of true religion is thus gloomy and fatal, for the hope of mercy brightens all its darkness. There is something sweet in mourning over our ingratitude to our Redeemer, even though we know that He hath forgiven it. The consciousness that we deserved nothing but perdition from the hand of God, makes the smallest comfort appear doubly precious, and leads us to enjoy it with peculiar relish. The idea of our demerit inclines us to submit with calmness to the severest afflictions. This consciousness of our own defects renders us less alive to the reproach of the world; and ill usage, which the proud man would avenge to his ruin, the penitent receives, saying, 'Let him curse, the Lord hath bidden him.' Your journey, ye mourners, lies through a weary land; but repentance, like the pillar of cloud, will spread over you a shadow, which will keep you fresh and vigorous; while they who frolic for a while in the sunshine, sink in lassitude and despondency.

Rejoice that repentance will certainly issue in life eternal. We cannot indeed view it as entitling us to heaven; but it is one of those graces which all the heirs of glory possess, and all who live and die without it must perish. It is by the exercise of this grace, that the saints are formed to that temper which qualifies for the work of heaven. With it, the modesty, the humility, and the admiration of redeeming love, which characterize the blessed, are closely connected. It has been often said, that there will be no repentance in heaven: it is true that there will be no sin to lament, to forsake, and to subdue above; but is it possible that the blessed in heaven can celebrate their Redeemer's name, without thinking of that guilt, misery, and pollution, from which He redeemed them? And can they think of this without loathing it? Viewing the Redeemer in His glory, sin will appear to you, when you arrive at the land of uprightness, peculiarly hateful; and remembering what you did against God, you will feel yourselves stimulated to serve Him day and night in His temple. The impressions of your own unworthiness will render the bliss of heaven more exquisitely sweet. Repentance will not have there her sackcloth, her lamentations, and her tears; but her modest aspect, her devout acknowledgments, and her holy beauties, will mark her out as one of the objects in whom the God of all grace will be glorified. While the saints cast their crowns at Christ's feet, she will lay their hearts there.

Be thankful to God, ye disciples of Jesus, for this inestimable gift. The heart which is softened by repentance, is the fittest for the feelings and for the hymn of gratitude. Bless Him for,

that illumination of mind, that sensibility of conscience, and that abhorrence of sin, which He hath given you.

Listen with readiness of mind to the ministers of religion, 'when they testify repentance towards God, as well as faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ.' Never let your appearance indicate that you have no relish for this topic. The doctrine and the grace of repentance are the glory of the Christian dispensation, and the high felicity of the Gentile world.

'Bring forth fruits that are meet for repentance.' How happy will I be if I can bear you this testimony; behold this sorrow at the table of Jesus after a godly sort, 'what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge; in all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter!'

Entreat that God may grant to others the repentance which He hath given to you. Your children are sinners; let repentance be one of their first lessons. By teaching them to mourn for sin, you will keep them from fretting and weeping for trifles, and guard them against the vices by which they might ruin themselves, and break your hearts. Hold up repentance in the amiable light to them in which God has taught you to view it. And recommend a contrite spirit to all your associates in life, as what will give caution to the manners, sobriety to the mind, and comfort to the heart, and render affliction light, and prosperity safe; and, in order to give efficacy to your serious admonitions, let them be characterized, both as to their manner and their season, by devotion and benevolence.

Increase your efforts to convert the wicked from the error of their ways. Pray that it may be said of those who were once profane, from their seriousness; of those once licentious, from their sobriety; and of the dishonest, from their confession and restitution,—then hath God granted to them repentance unto life. And may this gift follow the steps of every missionary, and attend the opening of every Bible, till God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Let us pray that this gift, so long denied to the Jews, may be granted to them. The greatest of their sins, their rejecting and crucifying the Lord of glory, they have never yet thought of with sorrow. For many hundred years their hearts have known their own bitterness, but they remain strangers to the godly sorrow which worketh repentance to salvation. The means of repentance enjoyed by the Gentiles are around them, but from these they are kept back by the malignant prejudices of their hearts. It is promised that they shall look on Him

whom they have pierced, and mourn for Him ; but we hear of a Jew weeping at the feet of Jesus as of a wonder. The vengeance of Heaven hath pursued them wherever they have been scattered, yet have they not returned to the Lord. They look to Judea, but it is for a deliverer, who shall bid the oppressed go free ; not for a Saviour, ‘ who shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.’ With the penitential Psalms of David in their hands, and zealous for the ceremonies of Moses, they have never yet offered the sacrifice of a contrite spirit. ‘ Behold the goodness and the severity of God ; on them severity, but on us goodness.’ Implore, from the exalted Prince and Saviour, repentance and remission of sins to Israel, and that the means which are now employed for their conversion may be crowned with success. ‘ Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they may be saved.’ Amen.

ADDRESS LXXX.

Scarcely for a righteous man will one die ; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.—ROMANS v. 7, 8.

IN these words the Apostle is supposed to allude to a distinction of characters which the Jews were accustomed to make. They used to represent society as consisting of the righteous, who rigidly regulated their conduct by the letter of the law ; the good, who made themselves beloved by their beneficence ; and the atrociously wicked, who were the disgrace and the pest of the nation. This language and classification of theirs, Paul employs to illustrate the wondrous love of God in the sacrifice of His Son. His own soul was filled with the most fervid impressions of His love, and he was solicitous to produce such impressions in the minds of others. May those who lead your devotions now speak to you with such light and warmth, and may the love of God be shed abroad in your hearts by the Holy Ghost.

The Apostle states, that scarcely for a righteous man will one die. Strict justice commands our respect and our confidence ; but if it is not associated with other qualities of a milder and more beneficent cast, it is not so likely to engage our affection. We know that such a man will do us no injury ; but it is not from him that we expect any self-denial to relieve, or any exertion to oblige us. Such a man is not deemed entitled to any costly sacrifice from us, or to any painful effort for his hap-

piness. To respect his rights as he does ours, and to render to him his due, is considered as fulfilling all his claims. It may happen that a man distinguished for integrity and justice in a high station, and whose administration of the law has been of signal advantage to a country, may be so venerated, that some, under the impulse of such feelings, may be willing at any risk to save him from the hand of violence, and to put their lives in jeopardy for his security; but in every state of society selfishness has been so powerful, as to render such displays of public spirit very uncommon.

With regard to the good, the Apostle speaks with much more confidence. It requires a strong effort to brave death; but gratitude for a good man's kindness, and a wish to spare so useful a member to the community, may induce some to lay down their lives to preserve his. It is beneficence which is most likely to be honoured with this willing sacrifice. Power may compel, and wealth may bribe the victim which is substituted for them; but beneficence leads it to the altar, and binds it with cords of love. There have been instances in which persons have ascended the scaffold for another, or rushed forward to receive the murderous weapon aimed at another's breast; but it was for the friend whom they loved as their own souls, for the master who had acted to them as a father, for the instructor who had reclaimed them from error and iniquity, for the patron who had loaded them with favours, or for the patriot whose death might quench the light of Israel. History records some examples of this substitution; and amidst the numberless proofs which it exhibits of the fury of the malignant passions, it is delightful to contemplate such instances of the power of gratitude and of the kind affections. Paul, in this epistle, speaks of some 'who had for his life laid down their own necks.'

But who will die for sinners,—to save the thief, the traitor, or the murderer, from an infamous death? Unless there are favourable circumstances in their case, they are left to their doom without a wish for their pardon; and though their punishment may be regretted by their companions in iniquity, they will purchase their own safety, if it is necessary, by giving evidence against their partners in crime. The more holy a man is, the stronger are his impressions of the wickedness of the sinner; and he would not aid the escape, nor take the place of a criminal in whom he sees something to excite his pity, but more to deserve his abhorrence. But herein 'God commendeth His love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.'

That your minds may be more strongly affected with this

love, consider who it is that is sent to die for us. The more exalted in rank, and the more excellent in character, the person is who is sent by another to promote our interest, we are the more impressed with his regard. We are especially struck with it if he is one nearly related to our benefactor, and high in his esteem. In applying these remarks to this topic, you will see how they enhance the love of God. He who was sent to be the propitiation for our sins was the Son of God, equal in dignity and perfection to Himself. He is the Wisdom of God, the Holy One and the Just, and the Almighty. In Him the happiness of Jehovah centres, and none is His by a tie so near, by a love so strong, or by a devotedness so perfect. Angels, who had witnessed the endearing intercourse betwixt the Father and the Son, must have been amazed at seeing Him abased whom they were commanded to worship, Him afflicted by Jehovah who was daily His delight, and when they contrasted the bosom of the Father and the throne of the Highest, with the poverty of the manger and the agony of the cross.

Consider further the death to which God delivered Him. It is only temporal death which is endured for the righteous and the good; its agonies are soon over; and in such a case it is sweetened by all the pleasing reflections which generous conduct inspires, and by the deep interest of admiration and sympathy which it excites in the spectators. Besides, it is the inevitable law that man must die; and to these substitutes for the righteous and the good, death must have come in a few years at most. It was but anticipating an event which must have soon happened, and relinquishing only a few years of existence which might have been years of little enjoyment and of much trouble. But the death of Christ was marked by peculiar infamy, exquisite pain, and lingering anguish. Besides, death was to Him not the result of necessity of nature, but of choice; and so far was He from being soothed by the pity of the spectators, that they passed by the cross in bitter derision. There were also sufferings in His soul, the severity of which it is impossible for us to conceive. And when we think that God was the inflicter of this anguish, that by Him the stroke was given and the curse was executed, we cannot but exclaim, 'Herein is love!'

Consider also the character of those for whom this was done. The persons for whom others have died had some claims to this sacrifice, in their rectitude and beneficence; but sinners are the objects of deserved abhorrence. They are not to be viewed merely as wretched, but as criminal. They are not criminals who are chargeable with only one transgression, or who are

bewailing their wickedness, and casting themselves on the Judge's mercy; but offenders who have committed innumerable crimes, and who are obstinate in their trespasses, and glory in their shame. This is a mournful but just account of human nature, and you feel that it is so. Sovereign grace selects its objects from among persons of this description; and those set apart for salvation are not thus distinguished because their crimes are fewer or less atrocious than those of others, but because thus it seemed good in God's sight. Now, for such sinners Christ died: He became 'legally answerable' for their sins, and suffered, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. That heart bleeds not for the innocent, but for the wicked, and it is broken not for the worthy, but for the chief of sinners.

The doctrine of our Lord's substitution, and of the vicarious nature of His sufferings, is plainly taught in this passage. The dying for the righteous and the good, is not dying merely for their benefit, but in their stead; and Christ's dying for us must have the same meaning. He endured the doom to which we were liable, and which must have overwhelmed us if He had not interposed in our behalf. The King of Glory is crucified for the rebellious. By this sacrifice the sinner is not only saved from wrath, but formed to gratitude, contrition, and obedience; and what no severity of punishment could have effected, is accomplished by the blood of the cross. Thus Jehovah testified in the strongest manner His detestation of sin, and thus He obtained that satisfaction to His justice, and that honour to His law, which the personal sufferings of the offenders, though protracted to eternity, could never have yielded.

Now, Christians, what are your views of this love? Are you saying, 'How excellent is Thy loving-kindness, O God!' and is this the sentiment which is influencing all your feelings, and prompting all your worship, 'God is love?' Have you come to the table of your Lord, confessing that your character is such as this passage describes, and pleading, 'God be merciful to me, a sinner?' If this is the case, He will visit you with His abundant grace; and while you behold in Christ's broken body and shed blood His matchless love, may you feel resolved to live to Him, and to die to Him.

Hath God thus given up His Son to death for you? hesitate not to resign your dearest comforts to Him. They were His gift, and they have often been forfeited by your unworthy conduct. You should reflect that they might have been demanded sooner, and that it is your duty to bless Him for

the opportunity of showing the impression which His love has made, and the influence which it hath upon you. It is at the cross of Jesus that the reluctance of nature is most readily and completely overcome. It was the virtue of the cross which enabled that mother to lay her child in its coffin without a murmur, and to assent to the expressions of resignation used by the pious beside her in prayer. It is this that strengthens the good man to say to those whose wailings are disturbing his last moments, 'What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? I am ready to die at the commandment of the Lord Jesus.' Had you been required, I ought to have been willing to surrender you; and when I am called away, it becomes you to rejoice because I go to the Father.

Let not the corruptions of your hearts be spared. It was for their destruction that Christ hath done and suffered so much; and if you cherish them, you labour to frustrate the end of His death, and to destroy the happiness of your own souls. How urgent are Jehovah's calls to abstain from fleshly lusts! and what He requires is not the laceration of the flesh, the bowing of the head, or monastic seclusion from the affairs of life, but the rending of the heart, the humiliation of the soul, and the careful avoidance of the follies and sins of the world. Self-indulgence may urge many powerful pleas, and may paint the hardships of self-denial in very terrifying colours; but the faith of that statement of the Apostle will guard you from yielding to its influence: 'If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.'

Lay all that you are and have at the feet of Jesus. Lay your souls and bodies there, that He may employ their powers in His service. Place your possessions there, that He may be honoured with your substance; your burdens, that He may bear them for you; your duties, that He may present them with acceptance; your attainments, that in them He may be honoured; and your hopes, that He may destroy them if presumptuous, and fulfil them if it will be glorifying to Him and safe for you. And I call upon you to place your sick and dying friends before Him, that He may do with them what seemeth good in His sight; and there let your last prayer be made, your last pang be felt, and your last breath be drawn. This is the prelude to your casting your crowns at His feet. There is not a gem in that crown which is not His. This, O my Redeemer, is Thy heaven, Thy bliss, and Thy glory. It is Thine in purchase and bestowal, and mine in possession.

Maintain a strict regard to integrity and justice. Without

these principles society would be a scene of misery, where the simple and the helpless would be the dupes of the fraudulent, and the victims of the oppressor. Nothing has a more unhappy influence in strengthening the prejudices of worldly men against religion, than the appearance of fraud or dishonesty in any of its professors ; and they are eager to represent the forms of piety, and zeal for its diffusion, as instruments of deceit, or as intended as a compensation for moral delinquencies. To justice add goodness, which is one of the most beautiful fruits of piety, and one of the great instruments which are destined for the healing of the nations. Without it, how soon would the solitary sufferer sink under his burden, and the child of prosperity loathe his lonely pleasures ! Without it, justice would want its best support, and devotion its best ally. It makes us feel the rights, the sorrows, and the miseries of our brethren as our own ; and, purified from every tincture of pride and envy, it will characterize the redeemed of the Lord for ever.

And when you think on what God did in love and pity for the salvation of sinners, you will feel yourselves impelled to use every effort in your power to enlighten and reclaim the wicked around you. It is not by pharisaic haughtiness that they will be inclined to the love of excellence ; and though severity may be necessary to check their excesses, yet this is not the most effectual means for their reformation. It is by instruction and counsel, expressed in the tone of compassion and kindness, that you will gain their attention. What a noble moral experiment has been made in some of our prisons, and how gratifying has been its result ! The most audacious criminals have melted in penitence, and the scene of idleness, profligacy, and impiety is now enlivened by cheerful labour, characterized by decency, and blessed by devotion. O let us not deem any too vile for our pity, or too abandoned for our efforts to convert them from the error of their ways.

Let the remembrance of what you were when this love beheld you in your low estate, and the consciousness of what you still are, repress every rising of pride and vain glory. Ye were not only unworthy of this wondrous interposition in your behalf, but are without a claim in yourselves to any of the blessings with which it has loaded you. Arise then from the communion table to walk humbly with your God, as well as to do justly, and to love mercy. There is no disposition more becoming in a Christian, and none which is a greater ornament to religion. It will incline you to that condescension to others which is so amiable in the sight of men, and to that patience under adverse dispensations which is of great price in the esti-

mation of Heaven. It will preserve justice from every act of rigour, and goodness from being puffed up by the praise of the world, or chilled by the ingratitude of the thankless. Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs are the privileges of the church on earth, and of the redeemed in heaven.

ADDRESS LXXXI.

Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.—ROMANS v. 26.

WHAT subject can be more suitable for your present meditations, ye disciples of Jesus, than the triumphs of grace? Oh that we saw their glory, and felt their influence, as the Apostle did! They shall occupy the contemplations and the praises of the good, when the trophies of this world have ceased to interest, and when the glories of time have passed away for ever.

Sin abounded in human nature. What a just picture of its debilitating and defiling influence do not these words present! 'The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint. From the crown of the head to the soles of the feet, there is no soundness; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores.' Sin has filled the understanding with errors and prejudices; it has set the will in determined opposition to the will of Heaven; it has hurried the passions to the most destructive excesses, and placed the affections on objects which they should have abhorred. But consider how grace did much more abound in that nature, as assumed by the Son of God. Hear in what language of rapturous admiration the Church describes the various excellencies of the Saviour. 'My beloved is white and ruddy, the chief among ten thousand. His head is as the most fine gold. His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set: His cheeks are as a bed of spices; His lips like lilies, dropping sweet-smelling myrrh: His hands are as gold rings set with the beryl: His legs are as pillars of marble set on sockets of fine gold; His countenance is like Lebanon, excellent as the cedars: His mouth is most sweet; yea, He is altogether lovely.' In Him we see a judgment which deceit never beguiled; a will in all things conformed to His Father's; a joy never tainted with levity; a sorrow that never sunk into despair; anger without one spark of malignity; kindness, beneficent yet discriminating; lips without guile, and manners adorned with all the beauties of innocence.

Sin hath abounded in the world, but even there grace did much more abound, in turning men from darkness to light, and

from the power of Satan unto God. Where idolatry practised its rites, religion offers her spiritual worship. Where gross impurities were practised, temperance mortifies the deeds of the body, and guards the chastity of the heart. Where impenitence was stubborn and audacious, contrition produces regret and holy fear. Where selfishness, intent solely on her own things, laughed at every sacrifice of piety, and at every effort of sympathy, zeal opens the lips for the honour of God, and charity the hand for the happiness of mankind. Where vain deceit uttered her impious speculations, heavenly wisdom shows the path of life.

The Scriptures present to us the most wonderful examples of superabounding grace. Where seven devils dwelt in a Magdalene, there the Seven Spirits of God shed abroad their influence. How much more potent in communicating happiness was the benevolent ardour of Paul, than his persecuting zeal was in producing misery ! and from the hands which were dragging the dying malefactor to the lake of fire, grace snatches him, and lifts him to paradise.

Christians, you can bear your testimony to the power and riches of Divine grace. ‘The grace of the Lord Jesus was exceeding abundant to me.’ Once the spirit of Satan was mine ; now I am changing into Christ’s image, from glory to glory. Once sin was my delight ; now it is my abhorrence. Sin made me a child of wrath ; grace has made me an heir of God, and of life eternal. My rest is more sweet than ever my burden was oppressive, and my hope more bright than my despair was horrible. How gloriously does the Sun of Righteousness shine above the power of darkness, and the King of saints reign above the gates of hell ! You are come, I trust, to the communion table to celebrate the triumphs of grace, and to solicit a more abundant communication of it than ever. You are now to partake of the feast which it hath prepared ; and hope, in holy confidence, may exclaim, ‘My soul shall be filled as with marrow and with fatness, and my mouth shall praise Thee with joyful lips !’

Ye disciples of Jesus, acknowledge, with lively gratitude, your obligations to Divine grace. My feet were sliding into hell ; Thy mercy, O Lord, held me up. ‘Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits :’ forget not any of His benefits, not even the least of them ; for in the least of them sweet mercy shines.

What cry is that which reaches my ear, ‘Grace, grace unto it !’ It is the cry of just men made perfect, ascribing salvation

to the grace of God, and hailing with such acclamations, as most suitable to its nature and design, 'the bringing forth of the head-stone' of the building of mercy. You hope to raise that shout on the heights of Sion; and let the riches and the power of grace be your song in the house of your pilgrimage. Let your faith be a dependence on grace, your psalms its praise, and your obedience its result.

Show the powerful influence which the grace of God, when received, has on the temper and the conduct. Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. Has the grace that delivered you from the pains of hell, left you at liberty to do its works? 'Return to thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee. For He hath delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.' And what does the Psalmist add to this grateful acknowledgment? Does he say, 'These eyes may now sparkle with impure desire; these feet may carry me to the scene of iniquity; and that soul may cherish any vicious wishes?' No; 'I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.'

Let the grace of God teach you to abound in charities; and whatsoever ye do, do it seasonably. Your kindness will be lost to the senseless corpse, and your intended admonitions will be too late for the departed soul. The caution which might have checked the young, when first entering on vice, will only excite their contempt when their hearts are hardened against the fear of God. And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily. Let your manner indicate that the heart goes with the hand in your gifts. 'A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth good things.'

Soon shall these words be applicable to you in their fullest sense, 'By grace are ye saved,' completely saved. Depart, rejoicing in this hope; for the grace which reigns to eternal life is your security for this felicity, and you cannot distrust it.

Be not lifted up with the favours which you may have enjoyed, for they are all of grace. The Saviour is more to be admired, loved, and delighted in, than all His gifts. 'Precious salvation!' has been the language of dying saints; but I think I hear you saying, 'If I have the powers of speech and judgment at that season, my last expression shall be, 'Precious Saviour!' Think not that I call you to undervalue communion with God. Many wonderful objects had the Apostle John seen; yet he looks back on this as the grandest of them all, 'We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.'

'As your sufferings abound, your consolations shall much

more abound.' The Lord will give strength on the bed of languishing, and in the house of mourning; where Nature says, I have lost a friend, Religion shall say, I have found the Saviour. Let the waves swell: the Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters. He can make you richer in faith than you are poor in this world, and your soul more ready for heaven than your body is for the grave.

I exhort you, in fine, to labour much in the Lord. The Christian's motto has been said to be this: 'All for Christ;' because for Him we should be willing to suffer the loss of all things. But may I not add to this motto, 'All in Christ,' since all our springs are in Him; 'All by Christ,' for it is through Him that God communicates all His blessings; and 'All to Christ,' for, bought as we are with a price, every talent and every moment ought to be sacred to Him? Amen.

ADDRESS LXXXII.

Who also maketh intercession for us.—ROMANS viii. 34.

IN these words we behold the Apostle triumphing in Christ. Who is there that does not envy his feelings? Even those who inveigh most bitterly against the presumptuous assurance of the enthusiast, must respect Paul's holy confidence, and wish for his rapturous exultation. The grounds on which he rests his security from condemnation, are the strongest that can be imagined,—what Christ did on earth, and what He does in heaven.

Had it been merely stated that Jesus was at the right hand of God, we might have been tempted to imagine that His condition there was one of indolent grandeur, and that He felt no longer that solicitude for our happiness which distinguished Him so much upon earth. But when we are told that He ever lives to make intercession for us, we are assured that love, active and unwearied, characterizes Him in heaven. Highly exalted as He is, He forsakes not His place betwixt God and the sinner. A name is given Him above every name; but He still retains the title and the office of the Advocate with the Father, the Mediator between God and men.

Let your meditations, Christians, be now directed to the nature of your Lord's intercession, and to the blessings we derive from it.

The intercession of Christ consists in His appearing in the presence of God for us, and presenting the memorials of His sufferings in our behalf. The Jewish high priest went of old on the day of atonement into the most holy place, to sprinkle

the blood of the sacrifice before the mercy-seat. No human being was permitted to accompany him. The worshippers remained without ; but bells of gold were placed upon the hem of his robe round about, that their sound might announce to them the safety of the high priest, and the acceptance of the sacrifice. Your great High Priest, Christians, is not entered into the holy places made with hands, but into heaven itself. 'He is gone there, not with the blood of goats or calves, but with His own blood.' The fragrance of His sacrifice fills the land of glory ; and the merits of His cross are mingled with all the splendours of His throne. Not one pang which He suffered, and not one effort which He made for our salvation, can be forgotten. The traces of the blood of the Lamb are to be seen on every garment, and on every blessing there. And the Gospel which you hear is a joyful sound from the great High Priest, who is passed into the heavens, announcing to you that His offering and sacrifice were to God of a sweet-smelling savour, and that because He lives, ye shall live also. Lift up your eyes, ye disciples of Jesus, to the world of glory ; see the blood sprinkled by His hands before the throne of grace ; behold your names shining on His breast-plate, and compassion for your infirmities swelling in His heart ; and listen to that voice, which, while the sorrows of Calvary rise in memorial before God, again proclaims, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' As His labours of love pass in review, they are felt pleading for His people's acceptance ; the tears which He shed claim consolation for mortals ; and that cross, at whose triumphant progress the nations of the earth shall bow, and the spirits of glory shall exult, hath ever power with God, and prevails.

The intercession of Christ consists also in His declaring it to be His will, that the blessings He has purchased should be bestowed on the objects of His mercy. He prays, 'Lord, let it alone this year also,' and the sentence of the barren fig-tree is suspended. He prays, 'Father, forgive them,' and the sins of the guilty are blotted out. He prays for the consolation of the good, and the Comforter descends to save the afflicted who lie low in grief. He prays for their protection, and the Almighty's hand is stretched down to shield the feeble and the defenceless. He prays for their sanctification, and the grace of God makes them perfect in every good word and work. He prays, 'Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me where I am,' and the commandment is issued, 'Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation that keepeth the truth may enter in.' How extensive are the requests

of Jesus ! No blessing, necessary for your happiness, can be omitted in His prayers; nor can He offer a petition which His Father's heart doth not welcome, and which His hand is not ready and quick to fulfil.

Christians, express to Him at this solemn moment the gratitude which you owe to your Intercessor for the blessings which you have already obtained, and for those expectations of grace and glory which His sacrifice and advocacy warrant; and, with the feelings of affection and joy which become you, partake of the symbols of that death which is the ground of His pleadings, and of your hope.

The intercession of Christ consists in His answering all the accusations which Satan advances against His people. Satan is the accuser of the brethren, who accuses them before God day and night; but no charge can he urge against you, which your Advocate is not qualified to answer. Your imperfect services He is able to beautify, and there is expiation for your sins in His atoning blood. He is perfectly aware of all that Satan intends to advance. There are no unguarded moments with Him, in which He may be taken by surprise. The subtlety of your accuser cannot perplex your Advocate, nor his audacity confound Him, nor his pertinacity exhaust His patience. And can you listen to the temptations of your adversary? He who now tempts you to sin, with a voice so soft and flattering, is he who aggravates your faults in the court of heaven, and exhibits your conduct there in the most hideous colours. 'Get thee behind Me, Satan.'

Has calumny assailed your good name? He who defends your cause in heaven, will not be unmindful of your reputation upon earth; and calls you, by well-doing, to put to silence the petulance of censure.

To the service of this Friend, thus generous and vigilant, you are now to devote yourselves; and should Satan stand at your right hand to accuse and to upbraid you, your Saviour will command him to silence, saying, 'The Lord rebuke thee, Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee.'

The intercession of Christ consists in His presenting the services of His people to the Father. 'I saw an Angel stand at the altar, having a golden censer, and much incense, that He should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which is before the throne.' Your tears of penitence, your labours of faith and love, your songs of gratitude, your gifts of charity, and your vows of obedience, He lays before His Father, as purified by His gracious influence, and solicits for them His

benignant acceptance. Your sorrows and your claims, your vows and your songs at His table this day, I trust He hath already carried to His Father, and they have been an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable and well-pleasing to God.

Amidst the worship of angels, and apostles, and martyrs, He disdains not to present the sighs of the prisoner, whose afflictions have led him to seek consolation in heaven; the prayers of the child, whose mind is opening to devotion; and the ejaculations of the dying, expressive of their earnest wish for mercy.

And shall not this excite you to greater zeal in the services of religion, and render you more solicitous to frame them aright? Say not, Since my Saviour's merits are infinite, it is of little consequence what imperfections adhere to my services. And can a disciple of Jesus thus turn the grace of His Lord into an argument for indolence and folly? He requires you to be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. The sacrifices which He presents are those of the persons who 'have done what they could,' whose aim it is to go on to perfection; yet who, amidst all their obedience, feel that they are unprofitable servants, and abhor every hope for eternity, but that of salvation through grace.

Meditate on the excellencies of your Lord's intercession. It is most earnest and affectionate. Many who solicit urgently favours for themselves, are cold and careless in their pleadings in behalf of others. It is only where the heart is interested, and where benevolent and generous feelings operate powerfully, that we can expect that a man will make the cause of another his own, and plead it as warmly as if it was. Jesus has the spirit of charity in its highest perfection, and the strongest interest in our welfare. His prayers are the prayers of the heart. Love stirs up wisdom to select its best arguments, and stimulates zeal to urge its strongest plea. That love which reigned in the sorrows of death, shines in the eloquence of heaven. His people, for whom He pleads, often ask His blessing in a careless manner, but their Advocate solicits for them with His whole heart.

The intercession of your Lord is constant. The most benevolent of human beings have seasons of languor, in which the efforts of generosity seem a burden; and the attention required by their own interests, withdraws their minds, on many occasions, from the affairs of others. But Jesus can listen at the same moment to the praises of the happy, and to the cries of the wretched; bestow blessings while He solicits them; and stretch forth the sceptre of mercy to the suppliant, while He presents His golden censer at the altar. How perilous would

your state be, if Jesus were to intermit His intercession in your behalf! The blessings for which you felt the greatest need, might be denied you; and the prayer might be shut out, on the answer of which your comfort seemed to depend. But Jesus maintains His intercession with unabated energy. Your best Friend can never cease to care for your souls. From His lips your names are never taken; and from His hands the censer never drops. As long as you traverse this wilderness, your Saviour on high will plead for your guidance and your safety; and, 'Be this happiness eternal,' shall be the language of His merits when you have entered into His joy.

Let not the feeble and timid saint imagine that the intercession of Christ extends not to him. No weakness of grace, and no obscurity of station in any of His people, can make Him disdain to plead for them. Nor can the number of your wants, nor the extremity of your sorrows, make Him shrink from interesting Himself in your behalf. With infinite merit to plead, and with love in His heart far surpassing our conceptions in its tenderness and strength, it cannot be thought that His intercession is narrow and partial. Multiplicity of objects bewilder the thoughts of men; and that sympathy which is demanded for a number of sufferers, is neither so tender nor so active as that which is excited by the side of a single mourner in the dust. This arises from the limited nature of the human faculties. But your great Intercessor is rich in mercy. The cares of millions are no burden to Him; and, amidst the claims of thousands of thousands, each has its due share of attention from the understanding and the love which are infinite.

Never entertain a doubt of the prevalence of your Lord's intercession. We often see here the most melting entreaties prove unavailing. Often has eloquence pleaded in vain, in behalf of oppressed innocence. No mandate goes forth to break their chains, or to restore their possessions. How often have the tears of nature pleaded in vain the cause of those whom the heart was eager to save from destruction! But the pleadings of Jesus are never unsuccessful. The justice and the mercy of the supreme Judge second all His claims; and the salvation of those for whom He pleads, is as dear to the Father's heart as it can be to His own. Him the Father heareth always.

Christians, does the Redeemer thus plead your cause in heaven, and shall not you plead for Him upon earth? His cause is the cause of truth and goodness. Plead it with the earnestness of affection, with the constancy of principle, with the wisdom which selects the fittest times and places for its efforts, and with that sanctity of demeanour which presumption

itself will hesitate to oppose. 'O Lord, Thou hast pleaded the causes of my soul,' and I will declare Thy doings among the people, and bless Thy name for ever and ever.

In fine, pray without ceasing. Your gracious Intercessor in heaven hath promised you His Holy Spirit to make intercession in you, to teach you what to ask, and in what manner to solicit His blessings. Ye young disciples, prayer will be an excellent monitor against those levities and indiscretions by which many, in early life, have made both themselves and their profession the object of contempt. Will the voice of temptation be listened to by him who hears it as he comes from or goes to the throne of grace? Aged saints, prayer will gladden your solitude by intercourse with God and heaven. I call you, who have been enjoying communion with God, to prayer, for it will dispose you to walk humbly with Him; and you, who are mourning His absence, I exhort to pour out your hearts before the Lord. Prayer will calm your impatience, and animate your hope. Continue instant in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving. Amen.

ADDRESS LXXXIII.

As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come.—1 COR. xi. 26.

WHAT an interesting view of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper is this! Your ideas of this ordinance are, I trust, pure and enlightened; yet it may be good for you to be reminded of the design of this service, and of the spirit which it ought to indicate.

In eating of this bread, and drinking of this cup, we show the manner of our Lord's death. The breaking of the bread represents the sufferings of His body; and the pouring out of the wine, the shedding of His blood. And while we contemplate these, shall not penitential sorrow rend our hearts? Shall not we pour out our hearts before Him, in the language of devotional feeling? If, in viewing the mangled body and the agonizing soul of the Redeemer, repentance gives no pang, and drops no tear; if gratitude and love make not the heart to burn, we must forfeit all claim to the graces of Christians, and to the feelings of men.

In eating of this bread, and drinking of this cup, we profess our interest in the blessings of Christ's death. 'The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood

of Christ? the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?' If we view this rite in reference to the world around us, in observing it, we thus address them: You may exclude us from many of your boasted scenes of enjoyment; but we have meat to eat which ye know not of, and joys with which you cannot intermeddle. You affect to pity us for the delusions that beguile us, and for the sacrifices we must make; but we think on you with strong compassion, and call on you to 'taste and see that God is good, and that they who trust in Him are blessed.' If we view this rite in reference to Satan, it tells him that we dread not his malice nor his charges; for, 'It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died.' If we view it in reference to the Lord of heaven, its language is this: 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places.'

In eating of this bread, and in drinking of this cup, we show our affectionate remembrance of Christ's death. A departed friend has claims on our remembrance, in proportion to the excellencies of his character, and to the services which he has done us. Such a friend is often present to our thoughts; but when the day returns, on which he bestowed upon us some signal marks of his affection, or in which he subjected himself for our sake to danger or suffering; when we approach the place in which we received his parting blessing, or at which we followed him to his long home, the heart impels us at such a season to go to his grave to weep there; and we bless his memory with the encomiums of gratitude and love. And shall we be thus just to earthly friends, and forget our best Friend? Shall excellencies which are unparalleled, love passing knowledge, and sufferings which rescue from the lowest hell, be forgotten? 'This do in remembrance of Me,' is the Saviour's injunction; and what is the language of our obedience to it? Men around me forget Thee days without number; on Thee, multitudes never bestow one grateful or admiring thought. To condemn their insensibility, and to show that in my memory and heart Thou reignest, I take the cup of salvation, and call on Thy name. O ye who boast of the strength of your feelings, who would count it the most painful reproach which could be cast on you, that you had forgotten a valuable friend, and who press every relic of him to your hearts, why is the cross of Jesus so seldom in your thoughts? Why do ye turn away your feet from His table? How defective is that sensibility which melts the heart at the remembrance of human excellence, but which is never roused to magnify the Saviour!

In eating this bread, and drinking this cup, we show that, instead of participating in the contempt with which others regard the death of Christ, we glory in His cross. The crucifixion of Christ was that part of the Gospel which was peculiarly the object of ridicule and opposition in the primitive times. To trust for salvation in one who had been crucified through weakness; to glory in the Founder of their faith, as dying in a mode which the universal consent of mankind had stamped with infamy; and to proclaim a suffering criminal as the most illustrious of characters,—seemed to the carnal and perverted mind the height of madness. In opposition to such ideas, and to the insults which they dictated, Christians were, by the observance of this ordinance, to show that they saw everything in the cross which could call forth triumphant exultation. The cross of Christ, from the redemption which it accomplished, and from the virtues which it displayed, is the noblest object which the mind can contemplate. Is it thus, O Christians, that you regard it? In Thy cross, O Jesus, is my salvation and my glory; the rock of my strength and my refuge is in Thee!

In eating this bread, and drinking this cup, you have been acknowledging the obligations which His death lays upon you to serve Him. You have been giving a solemn pledge, in the face of heaven and earth, that you will labour to promote the great moral purposes of His sufferings. You have declared that you will crucify the flesh, with its affections and lusts; that you will never listen to the temptations which may solicit you to abandon the Saviour; that on your heads the guilt of apostasy shall never be charged; and that to deny yourselves, to take up your cross and to follow Him, is the purpose of your hearts, and shall be the business of your lives. Were this moral view of commemorating the death of Christ as much regarded by us as it ought, the enemies of the Gospel would not find, in the sinful actions of its friends, those pretexts which they so eagerly seize, for ‘blaspheming the name by which we are called.’ When men who have gone to the Lord’s table are seen in a few days staggering through excess of wine, or when lips to which the cup of salvation has been lifted are heard pouring forth the hateful tales of scandal, the thoughtless contract prejudices against religion, which neither the reasonings of the wise nor the virtues of the good can destroy. ‘Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.’ Was Christ a man of sorrows, and shall we live in pleasure? Was He a pattern of patience and gentleness, in agonies

the most overpowering to nature, and shall we yield ourselves to peevishness and despondence, under temptations common to man? Did Jesus endure the cross, and shall we claim the sluggard's ease?

We exhort you to embrace every opportunity which God presents to you, of encompassing His altar. You have heard of the zeal of your fathers in the observance of this ordinance, and how they left their home and their business, to go to distant places for the food of their souls. Christian hospitality opened its gates to receive them; and religious conversation inspired, in the path in which they travelled, and in the places where they made their abode, the light and the fervour of the temple. And shall we, whose opportunities are more frequent, and whose dwellings are placed almost at Zion's gates, suffer any trivial inconvenience to detain us from the solemnities of the Gospel? Never let your language or your conduct suggest the idea to others, that the commemoration of Christ's death is with you a secondary object, to be postponed till curiosity is gratified by a succession of sermons, and to which your attention can only be obtained where preachers new and admired officiate.

There are some who once observed this ordinance, but now treat it with neglect. They have fallen into vicious indulgences, and they imagine that the world will censure them less severely, from their mingling no longer with the saints in their solemn feasts. How pernicious is their example, and how perilous is their state! 'It had been better for them not to have known the holy commandment.' We exhort you to 'continue stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.'

Let us rejoice in the perpetuity of this ordinance, for in it Christ's death shall be commemorated till He come. The fashion of this world passeth away. Customs which were once general in many countries, have gone into disuse, and are known only to the curious inquirer; many of the practices of our forefathers are sinking fast into oblivion, and will soon be universally forgotten: But Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; and one generation shall praise His works to another, and show His mighty deeds.

The event which this ordinance exhibits, is one which deserves continual celebration. It is one in which every generation has the same interest. Many of the events which are commemorated by men, are seen by a succeeding age in a very different light; and what their forefathers hallowed, bewailed, or exulted in, they may despise as unimportant: But Christ

crucified is, in every age, the wisdom of God, and the power of God.

Apostates may renounce their profession ; innovators may attempt to set this ordinance aside, and to introduce in its place something better adapted to their fleshly minds ; persecution may turn her sword every way to prevent access to Zion's gates, and to the bread which satisfies her poor ; yet Christ's name shall be remembered in all generations.

The memory of the destroyers of their species shall rot, in spite of all the efforts that are made to embalm it. The stately monument, which lifts up its head in all the pomp and beauty of sculpture, shall mingle with the dust it covers. The dwelling-place which was to continue to all generations, the trophy of the wealth and the splendour of families, gives its name and its honours to others. But 'a seed shall serve the Redeemer, and shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. They shall come, and declare His righteousness to a people that shall be born.' He who can of the stones raise up children to Abraham ; He who could in the desert give bread from heaven, and water from the rock ; He who displayed on a solitary mountain the brightness of His glory,—can never want a seed to serve Him, a place to record His name, and symbols to exhibit His blessings.

Christians, you must soon dwell in silence ; but the living, the living shall praise the Redeemer ; and the father to the children shall make known His love. Your mouldering dust shall have no part in this, or in any transaction that takes place under the sun ; yet with Jesus it will still retain its connection, and in Him it will sleep. I shall go to the generation of my fathers ; but I will go, saying, Because Christ died, to me to die is gain ; and because He lives, I shall live also.

The second coming of Christ, by introducing a perfect state of worship and of enjoyment, shall supersede institutions at present existing. This ordinance shall then cease. When that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away. When the Lamb is beheld in the midst of the throne as it had been slain, there can be no need of these symbols.

Then, O Christian, you shall show forth the death of Christ in anthems glowing with rapturous devotion, and graced with the sweetest melody ; and angels, who were but the spectators of your commemorations of it on earth, shall join with you in celebrating the Lamb that was slain ; the joy, the glory, and the head of both.

ADDRESS LXXXIV.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.—2 CORINTHIANS xiii. 14.

THE fulfilment of this benediction would render your present service truly delightful. It would give elevation to your minds, fervour to your worship, and gladness to your hearts. You are accustomed to hear it repeated at the close of public worship; and when I now express this wish at the commencement of your present solemn act of Christian homage, may the love of God be shed abroad in your hearts, the grace of Christ be exceedingly abundant to you, and the Spirit of devotion and peace descend upon you.

In this benediction you behold the doctrine of the Trinity established. If this doctrine had been an invention of men, and if it had rested on no other support than the curious speculations of Gentile philosophers, or the vain traditions of the Jews, the Apostle would not have employed language so obviously calculated to form the belief of it in the minds of Christians. It is impossible to reconcile the notion that our Lord is a mere creature, and that the Spirit is only an attribute or quality of Deity, with this benediction, for the most important personal acts are here ascribed to the Holy Ghost; and the grace of Christ is solicited for Christians even before the love of God. In the Lord's Supper you profess a devout regard and adherence to this doctrine, to the support of which you were pledged in your baptism. Let not curiosity approach it with its presumptuous inquiries, nor unhumbléd reason with its vain explanations; but let prayer draw near to it with ardent requests for the spirit of wisdom; faith, with entire submission to the Divine testimony; admiration, with its loftiest wonder; and reverence, with adoring awe. Never let Unitarian blasphemy or infidel scorn make you ashamed of a doctrine which God hath interwoven with every article of our faith, every rite of our worship, every expectation of our hearts, and every revelation of eternity.

In this benediction you behold the interest which each of the persons in the Godhead takes in your salvation. Each has his peculiar office in the promotion of it; betwixt them there is the most perfect harmony of co-operation; and in the result of the whole, a three-one God shall be all in all. They ought to receive from us equal homage of gratitude and trust; and in the worship of good men on earth, and of the just made per-

fect in heaven, you are led to this by the most striking examples. And how strange is it that such worship should have been stigmatized as idolatry, by any who profess to bow to the authority of Scripture? But there is as little argument in their reasonings to convince our judgment, as there is of piety in their addresses to the Deity to touch our hearts.

The specimens of Unitarian piety given us in the hymns and prayers published by writers of that party, suggest no favourable view of the influence of their system; and by a heart influenced by the Spirit of Christ, they will be read with no complacency. That admiration of the Saviour which diffuses over sacred poetry its noblest charms, breathes not in a single line; and the glories of His cross, and the agency of His Spirit, are overlooked with contemptuous neglect, and sentiments and feelings incompatible with them are directly avowed.

Amidst all the defects of the English Liturgy, its evangelical tenets and spirit must be admitted; and its devout and glowing addresses to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are a proof that its framers were aware of the interest Christians have in this doctrine, and that they were not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. There are ceremonies in the worship of that Church which savour of superstition; but it is only just to say of its Litany, that it is rich in the doctrines of Christ, and glows with the spirit of the Gospel; and in its supplications for mercy from each of the Persons in the Godhead, and its ascriptions of glory to each, the pious and the faithful in all denominations will cheerfully accord.

But you may behold also in this benediction the rich and glorious portion of true Christians. The delights of Divine love, the supports of the grace of Christ, and the influences of the Holy Ghost, are yours. The love of God gives joy in every ordinance, makes every dispensation of Providence acceptable, and elevates and strengthens human friendship. By the grace of Christ duty is made easy, trouble light, temptation is repelled, and death is overcome. By the influences of the Spirit bad passions are not suffered to make the saint wicked, nor gloomy feelings to render him miserable; and by it the holiness that adorns, the peace that tranquillizes, and the communion which blesses the soul, are maintained and perfected.

A good man may be poor; but with these blessings the evils of poverty will be borne with cheerfulness. He may be scorned and abused by the world, but God is his friend. Men may withhold their aid from him in difficulties, nay, may do what they can to aggravate his afflictions, but the power of Christ shall rest on him. Men may separate him from their company,

and cast out his name as evil for the Son of Man's sake ; but the communion of the Holy Ghost is a refuge in which the gloom of solitude is forgotten, and the terrors of persecution cannot be felt.

We trust, Christians, that you now feel the most eager desires after these spiritual blessings ; and if you ask them in the name of Jesus, and in reliance on His death and intercession, ' grace shall be to you, and peace from Him who is, and was, and is to come, from the seven spirits which are before the throne, and from the Faithful Witness, the first begotten from the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth.' May you now have fellowship with the Father in His love, with the Son in His grace, and with the Spirit in His fruits and consolations.

' Truly, O Christians, the lines are fallen to you in pleasant places, and you have a goodly heritage.' Yours is a heritage of which no vicissitude can deprive you, which shall yield you daily new stores of consolation and blessedness, and whose riches are inexhaustible. When you think how unworthy you are of such a heritage, and what a different portion you once madly sought, it will fill you with devout wonder, that God should have ' made an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.' Show in your temper and conduct the moral influence of this benediction. Let the love of God excite you to be zealous for His glory, resigned to His will, fearful of offending Him, and solicitous to please Him. Let the grace of Christ render you active in duty, firm and vigorous in resisting temptation, and let it repress all confidence in yourselves ; and beware of grieving the Holy Spirit of God, by the vanity of your thoughts, or the carnality of your hearts, or by any fellowship with the works of darkness. You will find, I trust, in this interest of the Holy Trinity in your welfare, your motives and obligations to all holy obedience strengthened, and will show, in your persevering resistance to every temptation to indolence and apostacy, its power over the conscience, and the moral impulse which it gives to the heart.

Let this benediction excite and direct you to frequent and affectionate prayer for those who are over you in the Lord. ' I beseech you, brethren, for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me.' The more your minister shares in the love of God, the grace of Christ, and the fellowship of the Spirit, the more will you be improved and comforted by His labours.

I call on you also to solicit these blessings in behalf of your

fellow-worshippers. The wishes of Christian benevolence thus expressed will animate you to all the duties of charity. You will not envy, or defame, or injure the man to whom you wish the love of God; you will not refuse your support to those for whom you solicit the grace of Christ; nor will you scorn the society of a brother, because he is poorer and less intelligent than yourself, for whom you ask the communion of the Holy Ghost. Do you wish one another the love of God? it is a call on you to brotherly kindness in all its forms. Do you wish one another the grace of Christ? it calls you to help every man his neighbour, and to say to him, Be of good courage. Do you wish one another the fellowship of the Holy Ghost? it impels you to say to them, 'Come, hear, ye that fear God, and I will tell you what He hath done for my soul.' 'Come, O ye house of Jacob, and let us walk in the light of the Lord.'

With this benediction friends may solemnize their farewell; parents may thus conclude their parting counsels to their children, who are about to leave their dwelling; and the dying may thus express their last wishes for the prosperity of those who shall survive them. In such circumstances, almost every heart feels the deepest anxiety for the welfare of those from whom it is about to be separated, and a consciousness that this only can be secured by the counsels and the protection of the Almighty. In uttering this benediction with the spirit and the voice of piety, a sense of religion may be awakened, and the most favourable impressions of Divine things will be associated with all their recollections of the melting scene. Enjoying the love of God, the grace of Christ, and the fellowship of the Spirit, they will not deplore the want of the counsels of a friend, the kindness of a husband, or the care of a father. Let the worldling desire that pleasure may give enchantment to every scene, that wealth and riches may be in their house, and that they may be crowned with glory and honour; in this benediction you will find wishes to be expressed by you, more suited to your character, and much more adapted to make those whom you love happy.

Study this benediction with more attention than ever. It will lead you to the most interesting views of the Divine character, and of the privileges of Christians. In it I see the essence of the Gospel, and the whole course of redeeming mercy. It should be inscribed on the table of every heart.

Be careful to show your regard for it in your conduct. Leave not the house of God, unless imperious necessity require your departure, till it is pronounced, and join in this part of the service of the church with all solemnity. There have been

instances in which the minister's voice has been lost while pronouncing it, in the noise made by those who were rushing out of the sanctuary ; and others have been occupied at that solemn moment in preparing for their departure, or for the expression of civility and respect to their fellow-worshippers. Such behaviour is a proof of a vain and worldly mind, of thoughtlessness, and of irreverence. Be it your care to stand in stillness and awe till it is finished, and to accompany it with the earnest wish, ' Bless me, even me, also, O my Father !'

Finally, Look forward to the larger measure of those blessings which you shall receive in the heavenly state. There you shall dwell in love ; there the grace of Christ shall reign in your eternal life ; and there the Spirit of glory and of God shall rest on you. With this prospect before you, it becomes you to be patient, steadfast, and active in the service of God ; since such shall be the issue of your labours, and such your portion for ever.

ADDRESS LXXXV.

That ye may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.—EPHESIANS iii. 18, 19.

THIS prayer of Paul for the Ephesians is distinguished by uncommon loftiness and energy. Behold how it swells beyond the feeble, narrow, grovelling conceptions of mortals ! That love of the Redeemer, which shone in all his sermons, and which was of all subjects of contemplation the most delightful to him, he wishes unfolded to these disciples in its wonders, and enjoyed by them in its blessings. Such, Christians, are our wishes in your behalf.

On these excellencies of the love of Christ let your hearts now meditate. You have looked to human friendship, and predicted the diminution of its enjoyments, and its utter extinction. Come and contemplate a love, whose power to bless heaven only can show, and which, through eternity, will continually open new wonders to you.

Think on the depth of Christ's love. It reaches to men in the lowest sphere of life, to the poor in the dust, and to the needy on the dunghill. Wealth and grandeur cannot purchase its smiles, and indigence and rags impede not the bestowal of its blessings. ' I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinks on me.' He exercises over me and over mine the care of a Father,

and treats me with all the kindness of the most indulgent friendship.

But is this the utmost that can be said of the depth of His love? No; it reaches to its objects in the lowest abyss of guilt and pollution. As low as Divine vengeance threatened to plunge the sinner, thus low did the grace of the Saviour reach. When you see the sinner wallowing in the mire of corruption, when you think of the damned sunk in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, and reflect from what He hath saved you, you must see reason to exclaim, O the depth of His love! How astonishing is the depth of that love, which brought Him from the throne of glory to the manger at Bethlehem; from reclining on the bosom of His Father, to agonize in anguish and in blood upon the ground in the garden; and from reigning in life, to the sleep of death in the tomb of Joseph! How vast the depth of that love which led Him to such scenes of horror for us, as made Him exclaim, 'Thou hast laid Me in the lowest pit, in darkness, and in the deeps: Thy wrath lies hard upon Me, and Thou has afflicted Me with all Thy waves!'

Meditate on the height of His love. Think of the height of privilege to which it raises its objects. Who can estimate fully the value of such blessings as these: union to His person, the best robe, the light of life, the crown of glory, and the prize of the high calling of God? Who can describe the height of excellence to which it raises its objects? It calls to glory and virtue. It advances to a participation of a Divine nature. It makes us holy as God is holy, merciful as He is merciful, and perfect as He is perfect. So high is His love, that it will raise every object of it to sit where He sits, and to walk where He walks. Have you seen the dying Christian soaring in faith and hope above all that is mortal, and longing for the period when he shall actually depart and be with Christ? It is the love of Christ which gives him this elevation, and it is He who says to him, Arise and come away.

Meditate on the breadth of His love,—how it reaches to men of all classes, and of every land. It reaches to the isles afar off, and shall make them wait for His law; to the burning desert, and shall open up rivers of water in a dry place, and yield the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. It extends to the regions of perpetual winter: and amidst the most piercing cold shall make the heart to burn. It will gather its elect from the four winds, and in it shall all the families of the earth be blessed. How astonishing is that love, which has reached from the scholar in his chamber to the savage in his

cave; which gives prosperity to the city, and beauty to the wilderness; peace in the temple, and hope in the churchyard! Bigotry hath attempted to prescribe limits to the Saviour's love, and has imagined that beyond the pale which she had set up it would on no account go; but the charity of the Gospel spurns her gloomy restrictions, exposes the malignity and pride which judge so unworthily of the Redeemer's heart, and hails its objects among every people, and its language in every tongue.

Meditate on the length of His love. It reaches from age to age, and from everlasting to everlasting. You have sighed over the inconstancy of human friendship; you have wept at the grave where the love of the kindest heart has perished; but I call on you to behold a love subject to no fluctuation, and which is eternal as the Being in whom it dwells. 'How excellent is Thy loving-kindness, O God!' With such thoughts of His love, pour out your hearts before Him.

Take comfort, ye friends of Jesus, from these views of your Saviour's love. Take comfort from its depth. 'He will subdue your iniquities; He will cast your sins into the depths of the sea.' Depth shall not separate you from His love. In poverty, it will make you rich in faith; in reproach, it will whisper, 'Since thou wast precious in My sight, thou hast been honourable;' in despondency, it will lift you up to joy unspeakable and full of glory; in oppression, it will deliver you from the foot of cruel pride; and when you are laid low in the grave, your dust shall be its care. Your resurrection in glory is its purpose now, and shall be its triumph hereafter. 'Thou, Lord, who hast shown me great and sore adversities, shalt quicken me, and bring me again from the depths of the earth. Thou wilt increase my greatness, and comfort me against grief on every side.'

Rejoice in the height of His love. Height shall not separate you from His love, by the temptations which prosperity presents. The love of Jesus will guard and sweeten your enjoyments, for it is the most delicious ingredient in the cup of prosperity; and it will lead you to that wise and generous use of the world, which will bless others, and yield a return of happiness to your own bosom. This excellence of His love confirms the hope, 'They shall come and sing in the heights of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord; and their souls shall be as a watered garden, and they shall not sorrow any more at all.'

Rejoice in the breadth of His love. It reaches to all your

dangers for your protection, and to all your trials for your comfort; to all your wants for their supply, and to all your duties for your aid; to all your interests for their advancement, and to all your connections to bless them for your sake; to all your purposes for His honour to accept of them, and to all your fears to dissipate them, by the kindest assurances that it shall be well with you. Ye are not straitened in Him; for 'He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that you can ask or think.'

Rejoice in the length of His love. You sometimes are afraid that your friends will grow weary of you, that your hold of the hearts of those around you is slight, and that you may soon be cast away from their regard; but Jesus hath said, 'I will not, I will not leave thee; I will never, never forsake thee.' There is nought that can tempt you to question His love, to which the grand scene you have now been contemplating does not furnish you with an answer. When the removal of blessings highly valued leads you to suspect the alienation of His heart from you, remember that He gave Himself for you. When sharp affliction suggests the fear that His mercy is clean gone, recollect that He bore your griefs, and carried your sorrows; and when the arduous struggles to which you are called induce you to think, if my Redeemer cared for me He would not try me thus, remember that for you He went through fire and blood.

But these excellencies of Christ's love hold out to you lessons of duty. Be willing to be abased as low as Jesus judges fit for His sake. Check every rising of pride, and seek not to retain what He commands you to relinquish. Let your respect and your kindness follow the saints into the most depressed circumstances. Shall your love refuse to sink so low as your Lord's has gone?

Envy not the superior prosperity of others. Is your eye evil, because the heart of Jesus is kind? In the variety of His distributions He displays His wisdom; and if He has given more to others than to you, it is to teach them gratitude, and you contentment.

'Let the high praises of God be in your mouths.' 'Set your affections on things above, and not on things that are on the earth.'

Let the breadth of the Saviour's love teach you to cultivate extensive benevolence. Be not like the selfish, who feel only for themselves, and who live only for themselves. To your pity, to your prayers, and to your efforts to do good, let neither prejudice, nor party spirit, nor a sordid temper, set limits.

Be not weary in well-doing, and never let your love wax cold. The nearer to death, to heaven, and to Jesus you are, you ought to exhibit more spirituality of mind, and more ardour in goodness. Show that the benevolence of the Gospel hath power to conquer all the tendencies of age to peevish complaint and to grasping avarice.

Anticipate the views which heaven will give you of these dimensions of the Saviour's love. What views will not the spirits of the just take of its depth, when they see the gulf of destruction raging far beneath ; of its height, when with their Lord they sit on the right hand of the Majesty on high ; and of its breadth, when they behold the nations of them that are saved walking in the light of the Lamb ? 'The stretching out of Thy wings shall fill the breadth of Thy land, O Immanuel.' And how will its length astonish them, as ages roll away in the enjoyment of its fruits, without one symptom or one fear of its termination ! 'Now, may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God, even our Father, who hath loved you and hath given you everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.'

ADDRESS LXXXVI.

To me to live is Christ.—PHILIPPIANS i. 21.

In these few words, the piety which is formed and animated by the spirit of the Gospel, is expressed in a most apt and striking manner. Though this profession was made to men, it was uttered under the most solemn impressions of His presence who searches all hearts ; and the Apostle might appeal to his conduct as furnishing the fullest evidence that it was not the boast of hypocrisy. To him life was valuable, from the opportunities which it afforded for advancing the cause and exemplifying the spirit of his Master ; and in every theme, and in every labour, Christ was all.

He states this not in the spirit of vain-glory, but that the disciples might see that he enjoined no devotedness to the Redeemer which it was not his wish and his study to maintain. There were many things peculiar in the pious attainments of Paul, yet the language which he here employs may be considered as descriptive of the character and aim of every disciple of Jesus, and there is not one whose supreme desire it is not to live and die to the Lord.

The grace of Christ is the principle of the believer's life. It is this that quickens the dead soul, which maintains the spiritual life, animates all its graces with vigour, and guards it from the influence by which it might be enfeebled or destroyed. The permanence and the prosperity of this life depend not on any efforts which we can make, or on any watchfulness which we can exercise, but on His influence who 'worketh in us to will and to do of His good pleasure.' This influence He imparts in the use of appointed means, and to wait on Him in these is felt by the saint as his duty and his pleasure. 'O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit.'

The example of Christ is the pattern of the believer's life. While others follow the multitude, or those whom influence or talent have raised to eminence, the determination of the good man is this, 'Lord, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest.' Never was excellence so bright and so lovely seen on earth as when Jesus was there; and among all the blessed on high, there are no graces which shine with such lustre, or which have been tried with such temptations and sorrows, as His. Do you make the example of Christ the subject of your frequent study, and do you feel, at every examination of it, stronger regret that you have so little of His spirit, and more eager desires to walk as He did? May the services of this day have a transforming influence on you, and when you shall see Him as He is, you shall have all your wishes and all your aims fulfilled in being completely like Him.

The service of Christ is the work of the believer's life. His saints are they who do His commandments, hearkening to the voice of His word. They feel that He has a claim to every talent, and to every moment; and so far from supposing it possible that they can serve both God and mammon, or wishing that it were so, they yield their homage only to a Master in heaven, and abhor the thought of murmuring at any mandate of His will, or at any place or degree of labour. O Lord Jesus, none that knows Thee will call Thee a hard Master. I am never so happy as when acting for Thee, and so easy is Thy yoke that it is my delight to carry it.

The glory of Christ is the object of the good man's life. Redeemed for this purpose, he seeks the advancement of it in the knowledge of His will and the obedience of His laws, the magnifying of His name and the extension of His kingdom. This is the object which he hath in view in all his pursuits, and unless this is gained no success nor applause will gratify him. O Lord, I will glorify Thee in poverty by contentment, in pro-

sperity by beneficence, in adversity by patience and hope, in Thy ordinances by spiritual worship, and in the duties of obedience by dependence not on them but on Thee.

The presence of Christ is the happiness of the believer's life. In communion with Him the pious affections are gratified, the sweetest consolation is imparted, and the most painful doubts and anxieties are removed. With Him our interests are safe, and our salvation is sure. Is it true, with regard to you, that you cannot be happy but where Jesus is? In looking back on your past life, what you once deemed scenes of enjoyment appear like a vain dream, but the seasons which you have spent with Jesus seem to you like the days of heaven. The bliss of heaven is in His love, and its light in the brightness of His countenance.

Some of you perhaps are now saying, in the despondency of your hearts, 'Happy are they who can use Paul's language; but I am so feeble, so cold, and so stupid, that I am either a stranger to spiritual life entirely, or it is about to give up the ghost. Instead of the language of exultation, I have been praying since I came to this place, "My soul cleaveth to the dust, quicken Thou me according to Thy word." I can see nought of the life of Christ in me, and nought can be discovered in the examination of my spiritual character but gross deficiencies, and coldness, and languor, in every moral effort.' But I see the humility of Christ in your abasement, and His faith in your keeping the way of holiness, in spite of all discouragements. In your present conflict, your enemies are trying you as they tried Him, and His victory secures yours. And the bread and the water of life are now set before you, which revive the languid, and encourage the desponding, while they establish the vigorous, and enhance the joys of the happy.

You have been mourning at the communion table over your sluggishness in the service of Christ, the small measure of conformity to His image which you have attained, and the dead works by which you have dishonoured Him, and injured the best interests of your souls; let your future conduct show that you have felt this deeply, and that you are resolved to serve Him in holiness and in righteousness before Him all the days of your lives. Let that glorious object which is now set before you, 'the dying love of your Redeemer,' be ever present to your view, and never let it lose its power over your hearts. In that death the graces of the Saviour were most triumphantly displayed; it was the noblest test of His submission as the Father's servant; by its influence all genuine obedience is ani-

mated, and to its bitter sorrow every enjoyment even through eternity shall be traced. 'Always bear about with you in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, and let the life of Jesus be manifest in your mortal bodies.' Let the spirit of His death and the energy of His life give sobriety to youth, and cheerfulness to age, probity in business, and devotion in solitude, zeal in duty, and hope in death.

Consider how Christ lived, and still lives, for you. While He was on earth, every purpose which He formed, and every emotion which He felt, every act which He did, and every pang which He suffered, were devoted to your salvation; and in heaven it is said that He ever liveth to make intercession for us, as if that was His chief object in His exalted state. He not only pleads the cause of His people, and prepares for their reception, but for them He reigns, and for them He triumphs. Let the faith of these truths excite you to greater exertions in His service, and in every scene to which He calls you let this be your first inquiry, 'What can I do for my Saviour here?' The men of the world, according to their various tempers and inclinations, live for different objects. To some, pleasure is the sole charm of life, to others wealth is its chief good, and to others pomp is its only glory; but let it be your care to show that you have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit of God, and that the favour and the image, the honour and the service of Christ, are all your salvation and all your desire. 'I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.'

And to you to die shall be gain. Death shall translate you from a scene where disappointment blasts many a fair hope, and where your brightest joys are torn from you in the moments of ecstasy, where corruption wars against the soul, and grace often struggles for existence, to a world of perfection and felicity. How dreadful is the loss of worldly men in death! Not only is every earthly advantage, every carnal pleasure, and every flattering hope, taken from them, but every opportunity of grace, and every possibility of salvation. These are succeeded by utter despair, and by misery that shall never end. But in death you relinquish nothing from which it is not for your advantage to be separated, and to go to heaven, though by the most agonizing mode of dying, is far better than to continue here.

In that world you will still feel, 'To me to live is Christ.' Eternal life is in the Son. There the Lamb leads, and the re-

deemed follow. He commands, and they obey. The Lamb is in the midst of the throne, and they sing forth the honour of His name, and make His praise glorious. The Lamb dwells among them, and they are happy. Christ is in every movement of the heart, and in every act of homage, in every feeling of enjoyment, and in every song of praise, in every review of the past, and in every prospect of the future.

Your translation to that world may be a loss to your friends, and to society. To your friends it brings with it the loss of your prudent counsel, your watchful care, your improving conversation, and agreeable fellowship ; but it can be made up by Him who is the Husband of the widow, and the Father of the fatherless. To society it will bring with it the loss of your influence, and exertions for the public good ; but God can supply it by raising up others more active, and more successful in promoting the righteousness which establishes a church, and which exalteth a nation. With God is the residue of the Spirit, and in His hand are the hearts of all. And now I dismiss you with your Saviour's blessing ; to His grace I commend you, and under His care I leave you. 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.'

ADDRESS LXXXVII.

Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him.—*PHILIPPIANS* ii. 9.

THERE are few who do not profess that they feel pleasure in the elevation and happiness of a man of true excellence, whom they have seen labouring under poverty and scorn. What man that has a heart in the least degree disposed to sensibility, can read without lively interest the history of the promotion and glory of Joseph ! but this pleasure is much heightened by the recollection of the pit into which he was cast, the slavery into which he was sold, and the prison which he preferred to the sacrifice of virtue. How delightful, then, must be the contemplation of Christ's exaltation ! It must be peculiarly so to you, Christians, whose eyes are now fixed on that wondrous humiliation to which His love to you led Him so cheerfully to submit.

Behold Him making Himself of no reputation for our sakes, and as the reward of this, obtaining a name that is above every name. Behold Him taking on Himself the form and the task of a servant ; and as the reward of this, every knee bows to Him, and every tongue confesses His glory. Contemplate Him highly exalted, who humbled Himself, and a reign in life given

to Him who became obedient to the death, even the death of the cross. See Him who was found in fashion as a man, and made in the likeness of sinful flesh, 'glorified with the Father, with that glory which He had with Him before the world was.' He on whose cross the inscription, 'Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews,' awakened in those that read it indignation or scorn, is now exalted to be a Prince. He who had this insulting scoff thrown in His teeth, 'He saved others, Himself He cannot save,' is now exalted to be a Saviour. Behold Him, the shedding of whose blood filled up the measure of 'His murderers' crimes, and exposed them to utter destruction, elevated to give repentance and remission of sins.

Rejoice, Christians, that your Lord is thus exalted. There are many things which mar men's complacency in the elevation of their fellow-creatures, which can have no influence here—such as the steps by which they rose to it. Who can look with complacency on a palace built with blood, or a throne established by iniquity? Who can see with pleasure a sceptre in the hand of the murderer of his species, or a crown upon the head of the man of violence? But in the exaltation of the Lord Jesus, we see excellence triumphant, mercy rejoicing over judgment, and grace reigning to eternal life.

The miseries arising from the advancement of the wicked, are a strong reason why men should not rejoice in it. 'The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest of men are exalted.' When the hopes, the innocence, and the peace of families are ruined; when a country is made a land of sorrow and desolation,—who can rejoice in the exaltation of such oppressors? What heart doth not wish, Oh that they were brought low! Around their thrones venal praise may chant her songs, and terror may express a feigned complacency in their triumphs, but there no tribute of the heart is ever paid. But Christ is exalted to dispense happiness and salvation to the ends of the earth, and to repair the desolations of many generations. The blessings which He bestows call forth the thanksgivings of gratitude, and the promises of His grace inspire the sweetest pleasures of hope. He reigns in the heart.

Many feel no complacency in the elevation of others, in which they have no share. When they survey 'the house of their precious things, their silver and their gold, their servants and their chariots, their ointments and their spices,' all this availeth me nothing, is their language. But in the exaltation of Jesus we have an interest; 'for God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved you, hath quickened you together with Christ, and raised you up, and made you sit in

heavenly places with Christ Jesus.' He hath taken possession of heaven as the forerunner of His people; and to whatever honour and felicity the Mediator is raised, His first care is to establish your claim to share it. You have come to His table to glory in Christ's cross and crown; and from His cross, and from His throne, He speaks and bestows salvation.

'If ye, then, be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.' There is nothing in heaven which appears at all desirable to a wicked man, but as it is a state of exemption from pain and misery, or a state of splendour and glory. But Christ in heaven is its beauty and glory, its charm, its bliss, and its security. What would the throne be, if the Lamb were not in the midst of it as it had been slain? What would the paradise of God be, if the tree of life was not in it? What would the fountains of living waters be, if the Lamb did not lead us to them? What would the society of heaven be, if He were absent, to whom every ear delights to listen, and whom every eye follows wherever He goes?

'Whom have I in heaven but Thee?' Just men made perfect, angels shining in glory, thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, ye are not my saviours, ye are not my heaven. Jesus is my life and my joy, my glory and my all. Christ knows that such are the feelings of His people; and therefore, when He promises them heaven, He assures them of the enjoyment of His presence, nay, of a share of His throne. 'To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame, and am seated with My Father on His throne.'

Christians, if the humiliation of your Lord is thus rewarded, you may rest assured that you shall not be losers by what you suffer for His name. Should you be branded with the vilest epithets, and reproached as hypocrites and blasphemers, fanatics and bigots, for Christ's sake, He will write upon you His new name. You may, perhaps, be driven from the ordinances which you love, but He 'will make you pillars in the temple of God, and ye shall go no more out.' Should cruel mockery array you in filthy rags, He will clothe you in white raiment. Should oppression spoil you of your goods, you may exult that your treasure is in heaven. The terrors of the dungeon have, to the sufferer, added new charms to his Father's house, and the dishonours of men heightened the raptures inspired by the approbation of heaven. The Master who supports the resolution and the fidelity of His servants, shall amply reward it.

'Make mention that Christ's name is exalted.' 'I will make

Thy name to be remembered in all generations.' When we extol men, our praises may be excessive. Friendship in its enthusiasm, and admiration in its ecstasies, often represent excellencies in brighter language than they deserve, and as existing in a more perfect form than they actually do. But Christ's glorious name is exalted above all blessing and praise. Often has it happened, that men have seen reason to regret the extravagance of their encomiums, when disgusting defects appear in characters which they considered as all fair; but the more we know Jesus Christ, the more reason shall we see to blush that our conceptions were so grovelling, our song so feeble, and our spirits so cold. Christ's name is majestic, yet it is most sweet. It is as ointment poured forth. Christ's fame is the sweetest music which can reach a holy ear; a saint listens to it with pleasure now, and he will listen to it through eternity with increasing rapture. 'Unto you, therefore, that believe, He is precious;' He is an honour. He sheds lustre on all that belongs to Him, makes the obscurest saint more honourable than his brethren, and the man whom the world despises, a crown of glory in the hand of his God. 'Now, may the God of all grace, who hath called you to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, and settle you.'

ADDRESS LXXXVIII.

That I may know the power of His resurrection.—PHILIPPIANS iii. 10.

FAR different from this were once the wishes of Paul's heart. His privileges as a Jew, and his righteousness as a Pharisee, were once the things in which he gloried; and to advance in the learning of his country, and to extirpate the Christian faith, were the great objects of his pursuit. Now, his grand desire is to win Christ, to be conformable to His death, and to know the power of His resurrection. The eye which he had raised with such veneration to the chair of Moses, he now lifted to the cross of Christ; and, instead of learning wisdom at the feet of Gamaliel, he sought it at the tomb of Jesus of Nazareth.

But did not the Apostle know the power of Christ's resurrection long before he expressed this wish? Does not he say, 'Last of all, He was seen by me also, as of one born out of due time?' There shone a light from on high, above the brightness of the sun at mid-day, which made him fall to the earth; and there came a voice from heaven, 'I am Jesus,

whom thou persecutest !' which vanquished the unbelief and the enmity of his heart, and made him cry out, 'Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?' But the Apostle wished to feel the power of Christ's resurrection in a stronger degree; and I trust it is with this wish that you have come to the table of Jesus.

But what is it to know the power of Christ's resurrection? It is to feel its influence in rescuing us from the thralldom of that body of death under which Paul groaned, and deliverance from which he expected by the grace of God, through Jesus Christ his Lord. Ye disciples of Jesus, do the suggestions of unbelief and of pride, of envy and of worldly-mindedness, distress you? And is it your earnest wish that the power of your living Lord may subdue these? He can make these archers, that shoot at you, and sorely grieve you, to quake, and to become as dead men, like the Roman guard that watched His tomb.

To know the power of Christ's resurrection, is to feel its influence quickening us to newness of life. It was Paul's aim to press on to perfection in goodness; and he wished to feel the power of his Lord's resurrection giving constancy and vigour to his efforts. Is it your language, O that I may live no longer to the dictates of corruption, but to the will of God! yet I am feeble and irresolute. Look to the place where the Lord lay; from thence comes your help. Can you see Jesus coming from the tomb, travelling in the greatness of His strength, and be weary and faint in your minds? Can you see Him rising for our justification, and catch no zeal in good works, and no energy in virtuous exertion, from the view?

To know the power of Christ's resurrection, is to feel its influence animating us to a bold adherence to His cause. Its influence in this way is indeed most wonderful. It made Peter, who gave so melancholy a proof of human weakness, the boldest of confessors; and it was this that kept Paul steadfast to his Master, though 'in deaths oft.' We cling not to a master who lives no longer to witness or to reward the exertions of his followers; but we have a great High Priest, who is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God; and shall we not hold fast our profession? Did the Saviour rise, determined to support the cause in which He died? and shall we fall from our own steadfastness? or be ashamed of Him who is entered into His glory? 'As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee.'

To know the power of Christ's resurrection, is to feel its influence in raising the heart from earth to heaven. Few have been so distinguished for heavenly-mindedness as Paul. He

had been caught up to the third heavens, and he could not forget what he had seen and heard there. Yet there were seasons in which his soul cleaved to the dust, and in which he felt peculiar need of Divine influence to withdraw his heart from earthly things ; and this influence he sought from that Spirit who had loosed from the Saviour the bands of death. Those that mind earthly things are the enemies of the cross of Christ, and hostile to its grand design, but we trust that your conversation is in heaven ; and, ‘if ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.’ This earth is a valley full of bones ; but the land afar off is the land of the living, and to it your souls are now aspiring. Your heart and your flesh are crying out for the living God ; and your Father now gives you the bread and the water of life from heaven, to strengthen every pious feeling, and to stimulate you in the pursuit of glory and immortality. Over these symbols of your connection with Christ, renounce for ever the friendship of the world, and anticipate the time when you shall eat bread in the kingdom of God, and drink wine new with Him in His Father’s house.

When our Lord showed Himself the third time to His disciples after His resurrection, He said to them, ‘Children, have ye anything to eat?’ And when they answered, No, he directed them to cast the net on the right side of the ship, and they should find ; and when the immense draught of fishes was brought ashore, some of them were laid upon the fire ; and bread being provided by His care, He said, ‘Come and dine ;’ and He took bread and gave them, and fish likewise. The presence of their risen Lord made that meal the happiest of which they had ever partaken. But He gives you His own flesh to eat, and ‘he that eateth Me shall live by Me.’

To know the power of Christ’s resurrection, is to feel its influence in supporting us under sufferings. That power which raised Christ from the grave, delivered Paul from prisons and from judgment. It released his feet from the stocks at Philippi, and rescued him from the mouth of the lion at Rome. The God of peace, that brought again from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep by the blood of the everlasting covenant, shall take you from the furnace of affliction, and enable you, while you are in it, to suffer like Christians. While hypocrites are discovered in their true characters by affliction, as the shattered condition of the wall is seen when the green ivy is torn away ; while their humility appears to have been only a show, and their faith to be dead, ye shall be found approved

unto God, and the trial of your graces shall issue in everlasting glory.

To know the power of Christ's resurrection, is to feel its influence alleviating the distress which arises from the departure of the pious and the good. To see the firm friends of the cause of Christ perishing by the hand of violence, was an affliction to which the Apostle knew he would be subjected; but he was persuaded that, while the Master lived, the cause could not sink. Can the gates of hell and death prevail, when He has the keys of both in His hand? He who rose from the grave, and gathered followers to His standard, like the drops of dew from the womb of the morning, can raise up successors to fill every place which is left vacant in His Church. You may be called to part with friends, whose counsel and example are a light to your paths, and whose smiles of affection constitute one of the charms of life. Nature is weak, and you may be afraid that you will faint under the shock; but the power of Christ's resurrection will confirm the feeble knees, and strengthen the sweetest hopes of your heart. It assures you that the dominion of the grave lasts but for a season; and that the threat which has so often given courage to the timid saint is not the language of vanity, 'O death, I will be thy plague; O grave, I will be thy destruction.'

To know the power of Christ's resurrection, is to feel its influence raising the mind above the fears of death. The Apostle wished to feel such influence from it, that he might finish his course with joy. Death, O ye disciples of Jesus, is the last enemy with whom you have to struggle; but the power of Christ's resurrection will make you say, 'Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory, through Jesus Christ our Lord.' I fear not the bands of the grave, for they are broken; nor the sting of death, for it is gone. 'Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy,' may well be the song of your last hour; 'though I fall, I shall arise; though I lie in darkness, the Lord shall be light unto me.' My heart and my flesh shall fail, but the power of Thy resurrection, O Jesus, shall be the strength of my heart, and its blessings shall be my portion for ever.

Now, Christians, let this request, which you have presented at the communion table, be the prayer of every Sabbath. On that day, sacred to the memory of our Lord's resurrection, may you feel, as it returns, a new impulse to obedience, and a fresh spring of joy from its power. And when nature leads your steps from the temple to the graves of your friends beside it, amidst your melancholy musings, forget not the joy-inspiring shout, 'The Lord is risen indeed!' And may you, every

day that you live, feel the influence of Christ's resurrection, in the vigour of your graces, the conquest of your temptations, the cheerfulness of your hearts, and the ardour of your obedience.

ADDRESS LXXXIX.

And to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come.

1 THESSALONIANS i. 10.

THESE Christians at Thessalonica were striking evidences of the moral power of the Gospel. They had been turned by it from the gross notions, the carnal superstitions, and the gloomy forebodings of idolatry, to the service of the living God, to that atonement by which guilt is expiated, and to a patient waiting for the second coming of our Lord. And I trust that by the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus ye have been brought from the corruption, misery, and peril of a state of nature, to the feelings, the sanctity, and the hopes of Christians.

Let your meditations be turned to the wrath to which you were exposed, that your gratitude may be heightened to your great Deliverer. There are some who, led away by the flatteries of a deceitful heart, or by extravagant views of the Divine mercy, reprobate the idea of God's avenging justice, and stigmatize the representations which are given of it for the most salutary purposes, as the forebodings of a gloomy enthusiasm, which loves to excite horror and alarm. But their views of the indulgence and indiscriminate mercy of the Deity are in direct opposition to His justice and purity, and are most pernicious in their influence. If, in the present scene, which was never intended for the full display of Divine justice, we see the prosperous villain often covered with infamy, and wretched by remorse, and guilty nations made the tormentors of each other, what must be the case in a future state, when the mystery of God shall be finished, and 'He shall plentifully reward the proud doer?' Revelation leads us to the side of the pit of destruction, clears away the smoke which issues from it, and gives us a glimpse of those who are dwelling with devouring fire, that we may gladly embrace the salvation which it offers.

How dreadful is the thought that this misery shall never come to an end! The chains of darkness are never unloosed, the devouring worm never dies, and the smoke of torment ascends up for ever and ever. In this world we are visited by

few calamities for the removal of which we may not hope. The world may do justice to the reputation which calumny has blasted, health may restore its bloom to the faded cheek, and reconciliation renew the intercourse of interrupted friendship ; but while the ages of eternity are rolling, there will still be wrath to come.

None of you, I trust, is saying in his heart, ‘ Why are such dreadful contemplations presented to us ? If they must be uttered in a Christian assembly, let them be addressed to those only who are enemies to God.’ The more vivid your impressions of the damnation of hell are, the more fervent will be your love to the Saviour ; the more serious and solemn will your spirit be ; and the more rapturous will be your joy in those blessings of salvation, to which God, in the riches of His grace, hath brought you.

From this wrath Jesus delivered you. Actuated by the strongest pity, when He saw our utter wretchedness, and the impossibility of relief coming from any hand but His own, He engaged to rescue us, by devoting Himself to all the anguish of the curse. He assumed our nature, and closed a life of sorrow, which yet was distinguished by every moral beauty, by the death of the cross. Why did the blood stream from every pore of His prostrate body in the garden ? and what made His soul exceeding sorrowful, even unto death ? It would be to dishonour His fortitude, and to degrade His love, to say that this arose from the mere dread of death, which feeble mortals have often defied, or from the ingratitude and cowardice of the disciples, which He foresaw, and generously pardoned ; it was His Father’s hand which bruised Him, and put Him to grief. What opened these lips in complaint on the cross which were sacred to the language of patient submission ? It was because on Him were laid the iniquities of us all. Thus was He made a curse for us, ‘ that, being justified by His blood, we may be saved from wrath through Him.’

O what gratitude do you owe to this Deliverer ! You are grateful to the man by whose skilful attentions your life is rescued from the grave, to which disease was hurrying you ; but he is only the instrument of the Divine beneficence, and relieves you without detriment to himself. The man who delivers a nation from bondage or from peril, is celebrated in its annals from age to age ; but we cannot compare this deliverance, or the sacrifice of ease or of life by which it has been attained, to our redemption from utter ruin in soul and in body for ever ; and to those agonizing sorrows by which it hath been accomplished, and which are now to be exhibited in ex-

pressive symbols. We must know the power of God's anger, and the intensity of Christ's sufferings, ere we can understand the value of this deliverance, or the love which achieved it.

As a guilty sinner, I deserved the pains of hell; and when my conscience was awakened, I felt its remorse and despair working within me; and I thought, if the beginning of sorrows is so overwhelming, what must wrath to the uttermost be! In this dreadful state I sought the Lord Jesus, and He heard me; He washed me from all my sins, and delivered me from all my fears; and instead of drinking of the wine of the wrath of God from the cup of His indignation, and being tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the Lamb, the children's bread and the wine of the kingdom are mine. 'I will praise Thee, O Lord, with my whole heart, I will glorify Thy name for evermore; for great is Thy mercy to me, and Thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.'

Christians, the resurrection of your Lord from the dead is a proof that the purchase of your deliverance from wrath is completed. If the price of your redemption had not been paid, your Surety would not have been taken from prison and from judgment. But to show that every demand had been answered to the full, He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. His Father brought Him from the grave, and received Him to glory, not in obscurity and silence, which might have excited the suspicion that the elect were 'scarcely saved,' but with the splendour and applause of a triumphant conqueror. Come, see the place where the Lord lay, and behold in that empty grave a pledge that the prison of hell shall never enclose you; and in these opening heavens, and in that enthroning of your Redeemer, an assurance is given that eternal glory shall be yours. 'Ye were by nature the children of wrath, even as others; but God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved you, even when you were dead in sins, quickened you together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places with Christ Jesus.' And your Lord will come from heaven, publicly to announce your deliverance, and to put you in full possession of it. The resurrection makes this certain; for it was the first stage of His exaltation, and secures all the rest. It was the solemn fixing of the seal of Heaven to His commission to judge the world. As He gave the first, so shall He give the final blow to death and sin; 'and your conversation is in heaven, from whence you look for the Saviour.' Could you wish a judge more indulgent than Him who is touched with the feelings of

your infirmities, one better acquainted with your circumstances than your Advocate with the Father, or one more able to befriend you than the Almighty Saviour? To you the majesty of the Judge shall be softened by the compassion of a Saviour; and unrelenting justice to the wicked cannot indispose Him for the language of love, and the exercise of mercy to you. When you shall hear the doom of the wicked, and see them led away into everlasting punishment, without a mouth being opened to plead for them, or a hand stretched forth to stay their doom, He shall call you to eternal rest and glory. He thinks it not enough to save you from misery, but to raise you to fulness of joy, and to pleasures evermore.

Now, for this coming of your Lord you must wait. You know His coming is certain; but it is delayed for the wisest reasons, and you must believe that He will appear at the period fixed by infinite wisdom and love. Wait for His approach in the patient discharge of the duties which prepare for it. Wait for it not in the indolent posture of the sluggard, nor slumber to beguile the time; but 'let your loins be always girt, and your lamps burning.' Your Lord delays His coming to give you time to finish your course; and it will require every moment that is allotted you, to show the necessary diligence, 'that you may be found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless.' To draw back, is to draw back to perdition; but to hold on must be your interest, whatever it may cost you, for 'he that endureth to the end shall be saved.'

Fret not that you have no hope of release from present evils. Poverty may oppress you in spite of all your efforts to better your circumstances, and from the furnace of affliction no way of escape may be opened; but the prison of hell shall not close upon you, and ye shall not fall into the avenging hands of the living God.

Stand in awe and sin not. Indulgence in sin will be the basest ingratitude to your Deliverer; and God may punish it, by giving you up to such terrors as will make you the most miserable of all men. I know not a more certain evidence that a man has no interest in this deliverance, than his fancying himself released by it from all need of moral circumspection. The Lord is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. Soon shall you have it to say, 'The next morning which shall dawn upon me, shall be that in which my Lord shall be revealed from heaven; the next voice to which these ears will listen, shall be the midnight cry, 'Behold, the Bridegroom cometh! go ye out to meet Him;' and the next words which I shall speak, shall be my account of myself to God. In that hour, O my De-

liverer, befriend me, or I shall be undone; and He will befriend you, for to them that look for Him He comes to save. The trump of God shall sound, but it will be to announce that your redemption draweth nigh; the chariots of God will come shining in splendour, but it will be as instruments of deliverance; the great white throne will be set, but it will be to you a throne of grace; and heaven and earth shall pass away, but the Saviour will fix you as a seal upon His arm, and keep you in perfect peace.

It often happens that the objects of worldly expectation, when they arrive, produce feelings of disappointment; but how different are the feelings with which your Lord will be welcomed! 'This is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.' O why, my soul, art thou so cold in thy wishes, so languid in thy efforts, and so sluggish in thy preparations for that day? I have said, Would to God it were morning! yet light hath brought me no healing in its wings. I have waited for the return of friends; but their altered looks and conduct have told me that they were estranged. But in my Lord, when He comes, I must be happy; for His power and love are eternal. 'Wherefore gird up the loins of your minds, and be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that shall be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.'

ADDRESS XC.

Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.—1 THESSALONIANS v. 10.

SUCH is the argument by which the Apostle enforces the cultivation of the Christian graces, and the practice of strict sobriety. And what view can we take of the death of our Lord, more likely to move the heart, and influence the conduct, than this?

Christ died for us. To point out the agency of others in our Lord's sufferings, He is said to be put to death; but to show how cheerfully He submitted to them for our sakes, it is said that He died. The Father delivered Him up, but He surrendered Himself. When His enemies came out to seize Him, He said, 'I am He whom ye seek;' and, without the smallest attempt at resistance, He committed Himself to their hands. 'The Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all;' but He bowed His back to receive that burden. On His head the Father discharged the tempest of wrath; but He bared it for the fury of

the storm, and kept it erect and exposed to it, till He could say, 'It is finished,' and then He bowed it and gave up the ghost.

When Providence calls us to suffer, we often discover the greatest reluctance. Nature shrinks; the hand is raised as if to avert the blow, and the voice cries, O spare me! Many who submit to sufferings at first with courage, find their spirits failing under protracted agony, and are heard exclaiming, 'Remove Thy stroke away from me; I am consumed by the blow of Thine hand:' but the Redeemer endured to the end.

But for what object was this death endured? It was that you might live with Him. Sometimes we are said to die with Christ. This is a figurative expression, and points out our interest in His death. We cannot drink of the cup of which He drank; but the expression, *live with Him*, shall be realized in its plainest and utmost extent of meaning.

Christians, you live with Christ, in some measure, even in this world. He died that your dead souls might be quickened by His Spirit; that those principles might be formed within you, without which there could be no intercourse betwixt heaven and you, and to procure for you the most delightful fellowship with Himself. In the faith which sees Him that is invisible; in the love which elevates the heart to God; and in the hope that enters within the veil, you live with Him; and His word and His Spirit, His comforts and His laws, His secret and His work, are with you. The expression, *living with Him*, intimates the familiarity and the continuance of your intercourse with Him. You are like children under a father's roof, enjoying the kindest attentions of parental care. These never will weaken your reverence for your Lord. John, lying on Christ's breast, and asking Him in a whisper, who would betray Him, says, 'Lord, who is it?' With the claims of affection, as well as with the sighing of penitence, godly fear mingles its language and its emotions.

By various events you may be separated from those with whom you have lived, and this must take place in death. Few there are of whom it can be said, as of Saul and Jonathan, 'They were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their deaths they were not divided.' One grave may contain those who have lived in one dwelling; but commonly when they are reunited, the corpse is laid among the bones and the dust of what was once excellent in beauty and strength. But there is nought that can separate you from the love of Christ. 'I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; and I will put My fear into their hearts, and they shall not turn away from Me.'

To nourish His life in you, this table is spread. To confirm your faith in its immortal duration, to give you the pledges of His presence and favour, and to cherish in you that grateful sense of the Redeemer's dying love, which excites to the cultivation of all that is excellent in character, He calls you to partake of the bread of memorial, and of the cup of blessing. And let your hearts listen to His gracious words, 'I am the resurrection and the life : he that believeth on Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live : and whosoever liveth, and believeth on Me, shall never die.'

Come from the four winds, O breath, and blow on these disciples, that spiritual life may display in their devotion its brightest energy.

Christians, your Lord died for you, that while you sleep in the grave you might live with Him. 'While the dust returns to the earth as it was, the spirit returns to God that gave it.' How delightful is the thought, that death is not the extinction of our being ! The eye of thy pious friend in the dust is now closed ; but the soul, whose movements of joy, or kindness, or hope made it sparkle, lives in happiness and love made perfect. The hand is cold, it cannot return thy pressure ; but the soul, whose strong attachment was evinced by the grasp, lives in the superior exercise of every kind affection. The tongue is silent ; but the spirit, whose admiration and gratitude filled it with praise, serves God day and night in His temple. The body is sinking fast into a handful of dust ; but the soul is rising from glory to glory. It kindles no longer at the contemplation of the material universe, or at the transactions of this earthly scene ; but objects far more sublime call forth all its powers.

Ye have not so learned Christ as to imbibe the notion of the soul's sleep from death till the resurrection. This is a notion which degrades the soul of man, and extends the triumphs of the grave ; which deepens the gloom of the house of mourning, and stamps with folly the Christian's last prayer, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' It is not with clods of dust that the spirits of just men made perfect mingle, but with an innumerable company of angels, and with Jesus, the Mediator of the covenant.

And when the resurrection comes, you shall live, ye friends of Christ, with Him in body as well as in soul. Your vile bodies, fashioned like His, shall shine as His glorious body doth shine, shall abide where it dwells, and shall go where it goes. Our immortal spirits shall adore in profound humility, where the body kneels ; glow with the sublimest ecstasy, where it shouts for joy ; and whatever it grasps, to that they shall cleave

in confidence and affection. 'As for me, I shall behold Thy face in righteousness; and when I awake, I shall be satisfied with Thy likeness.' The body and the soul, though too often sources of misery and sin to each other, are yet unwilling to be separated; but when reunited in heaven, there shall be no quality in either to embitter their connection, or to make its termination necessary.

The happiness of the believer derives its sweetness from its connection with Christ. It is not on sitting on a throne, or walking in white, or reigning in life, that his mind dwells; but on sitting with Christ on His throne, walking with Him in white, and reigning with Him in life. Without Jesus, earth would seem a prison, nor could he be happy even in heaven.

How vast are your obligations to the Saviour! We must be able to tell the happiness there is in heaven, and the duration there is in eternity, before we can understand fully the extent and value of our obligations to the Lord Jesus, whose love to us was stronger than death.

Show the influence of these views of the death of Christ, in producing growth in grace and sobriety of demeanour. With such a foundation for your faith and hope, let them advance in strength. With such motives to love your Redeemer, let your hearts burn with a more fervent affection; and let your moderation be known to all men. With the lofty hopes of religion before you, can you stoop to brutish folly, or to carnal indulgence? walk in the idle pomp of the vain, or wallow in the mire of intemperance? Destined to live with Christ for ever, shall you mingle with those who say, 'Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we shall die?'

The crown of glory is put on no head but on that which is found in the way of righteousness; tears are wiped from no eyes but those which are sacred to penitence and purity; and none shall be ever with the Lord, but those who are conformed to His image. Live not as the men of the world do, and go not ye after their ways; for their spirit is madness, their pursuits are folly, and their end is ruin. O 'gather not my soul with sinners.' 'He that saith he abideth in Christ, ought himself also so to walk, even as He also walked.' Thus may you walk, and with Him you shall rest for ever.

ADDRESS XCI.

We have not an High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.—HEBREWS iv. 15.

IN the descriptions of virtuous characters, written by many of the heathen moralists, there is a sternness at which the heart revolts. Justice and fortitude were their favourite excellencies; and sensibility and compassion they despised, as utterly inconsistent with energy of mind and dignity of character. They delighted to exhibit their heroes as rising superior to their own sufferings; and as viewing with contempt, rather than with indulgence and pity, the sorrows of others. How different is the character of our Lord! In Him we behold courage, which a death of torture could not shake, mingled with the tenderest yearnings of mercy. The eye that never beheld vanity, was no stranger to the tear of pity; and that heart which sin never defiled, often sent forth the sigh of compassion.

Such was our Saviour's conduct while on earth. But is His heart susceptible of pity in heaven? Amidst the joys of His Father's presence, will He enter into the woes of the wretched? Listen, Christians, to this description given of His heart, by one who wrote it by inspiration from Himself. O may the delightful evidences of His sympathy send you away from His table rejoicing.

Your High Priest, Christians, knows all your sorrows. The obscurity of indigence veils many a scene of sorrow from human view, but to Him all things are naked and open. 'Thou tellest all my wanderings, Thou puttest my tears into Thy bottle.' By Him every groan is heard, and every pang is seen.

Your High Priest was in all points tried like as you are. He was subjected to temptations the most horrid, and to reproaches the most vile, to oppressive labours, and to deadly sorrow. How soothing is this thought to the afflicted heart! The burden that I am bearing was laid on Christ's shoulders, and His heart was wrung by the griefs which now torture mine. There is no scene of difficulty in the way to heaven, where we cannot behold the traces of our Lord's footsteps.

Your High Priest pities your sorrows. 'He knows our frame, He remembers that we are but dust.' Who is he that most readily draws out his soul to the unhappy? It is the man who hath seen affliction by the rod of God's wrath. It is

in the experience of sorrow, that some of our noblest institutions of charity have originated. Asylums for orphans, hospitals for the sick, and quiet habitations for the lunatic, have been reared by those who had known the griefs of an orphan's heart, the pangs of disease, and the horrors of a troubled mind. Jesus 'suffered, being tempted, that He might know how to succour them that are tempted.' The melting heart, the soothing voice, and the kind supports of pity, are His. That sigh which you heard in your sorrow, came from the Saviour's bosom. That voice issued from His lips, which said, 'I will not leave you comfortless;' and it was His hand that lifted you from the pit, which you thought would have been your grave.

Meditate, Christians, on the excellencies of your Lord's sympathy. It is most tender. In Him there are no selfish principles to impede its emotions. Nature hath no sensibilities, friendship no meltings, and religion no charities so tender as the compassion of Christ. In your affliction, He is afflicted; in your oppressions, He is persecuted; in your reproaches, He is calumniated; in your sorrows, He is troubled; in your desertion, He is abandoned; and in your chains, He is bound. The mother that watches by the sick-bed of a child, and who says, as she witnesses the pang that shakes the feeble frame, Oh that I had suffered this in thy stead! enters not into its sorrows so fully as Christ does into yours. Remember, O Christian, the expression of His eye when He looked on affliction; the accents of His voice, when He spake to thee a word in season; and the manner in which He handled thy wounds and bound up thy sores, and acknowledge the tenderness of His pity.

The sympathy of our Lord, is exactly adapted to the claims of our sorrow. Men often complain, that they are not pitied by their friends to the degree that their sorrows require. Selfish views and habits will make a man yield a great degree of sympathy to one species of sorrow, and scarcely express any to another as worthy of pity. But Jesus knows the nature of every sorrow, and the rest which the weary and the heavy-laden require. Worldly circumstances often direct men in their sympathies. Many inquiries are made at the rich man's gate when he is sick, and many mourners go to condole with his friends when he is gone; while the poor are neglected, as if the child of sorrow, perishing on his straw, was an object too mean for the notice of sympathy. But the afflicted's prayer Jesus will never scorn; and His ear is never turned away from the groans of the prisoner.

Before this Lord of compassions, I call on you to pour out

your hearts, and to say, with the Jews, when they saw His tears of pity, 'Behold how He loved us.'

The sympathy of your High Priest is effectual. Human pity can, in many cases, give no relief. The humane often see with sorrow the bands of wickedness, which they are not able to unloose; the ravages of disease, which they cannot stay; and the fury of despair, which they cannot assuage. But all power is given to your Lord in heaven and in earth, and He is able to save to the uttermost. He hath raised families in sorrow, to joy and health; the victim of oppression He hath set in safety; the frightful suggestions of the devil, which were urged on the heart, He hath silenced; and the man who had thought his good name was irrecoverably gone, and that infamy, however undeserved, would make his death unpitied, and his grave accursed, has been restored by Him to the confidence and respect of all around.

Rejoice, Christians, in the constancy of your Lord's sympathy. Human compassion is often shortlived. There are various causes which contribute to blunt the feelings. The cares of the world engross the heart, and the neglect which men have experienced under their own sufferings, has chilled their sympathy with others. But the mercy of our Saviour endureth for ever. Mercy as well as goodness, ye saints of God, shall follow you all the days of your life. No suggestions of enemies can chill the heart of the Saviour; His ear they cannot close; and His hand they cannot turn away.

Now, Christians, let the sympathy of your Lord render Him more dear than ever to your hearts. You have a more tender interest in His heart than the angels that never sinned. The sons of God still shout for joy, and their happiness is pleasing to Jesus, who confirmed them in it; but to make them happy, He neither toiled nor bled. The miseries of the fallen angels never excited His pity; they tremble, but He gives them no quietness; and they are reserved unto judgment, but hope never lightens their chains. How different has been His conduct to you? See that you love Him with a pure heart fervently.

Never distrust His sympathy. Say not, whatever be your sorrows, 'Thou art become cruel to me; with Thy strong hand Thou opposest me.' Who questions the benignant influence of the sun, because he permits clouds to darken the sky, and the rain and the snow to descend? The rain and the snow contribute to fertilize the earth, and thus work, in conjunction with him, in making it yield its increase. 'The Lord taketh plea

sure in them that hope in His mercy.' Never let mercy claim your confidence in vain.

I exhort you to fear the Lord and His goodness. How often is the compassion of Christ asked by men for themselves or others, without any proper idea of its worth! Lord pity me, is often the language of unmeaning surprise; Lord pity him, is often the language of selfish indifference, when it shuts up its bowels of compassion. Solicit ye His mercy in holy reverence and deep contrition. The majesty of Christ is not lost amidst the charms of His benignity or the meltings of His compassion.

In fine, cultivate sympathy with each other. The views you have taken of His character and of each other as brethren, at the communion table, call you to the spirit and the offices of compassion and kindness. Are you in prosperous circumstances? Sympathy with the unhappy will bless and sanctify them. How comfortable will not your dwellings seem, after ministering to poverty and sickness in their dark abode! How sweet will be the smiles of your family, after gladdening the hearts of the widow and the fatherless! If you are in adversity, sympathy with the miseries of others will lighten your sorrows. Remember that there are in the world miseries more agonizing, and nights more wearisome, than yours. Let none say, my sympathy will not avail the afflicted, for the time will come when you will know by experience the value of a consoling word and a pitying tear. The voice of sympathy has calmed many an agitated bosom, and its tears have refreshed many a withered heart. 'Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.' 'Have compassion one of another; be pitiful.'

ADDRESS XCII.

Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared.—HEBREWS v. 7.

Our Lord's days on earth were characterized by devotion. His miracles were preceded, His sermons were followed, His labours were lightened, and His sufferings were soothed by prayer. But there were some occasions on which He poured out His soul to God with peculiar earnestness. This was the case in His agony, and to that scene the Apostle here refers.

In that scene our Lord offered up prayers and supplications.

The word rendered prayers signifies deprecations of evil ; and the term suppliant is applied to those who fall down at the feet of the persons they address, and take hold of their knees while they beseech them to be favourable to them.

Our Lord's prayers were offered at this memorable period with strong crying and tears. When Jesus was brought before men, and suffered from their hands, He was silent ; but when God entered into judgment with Him, His cries were vehement ; and though they were heard by no human ear, they rose before the throne of the Highest. The expression intimates earnest desire and urgent entreaty.

The Evangelists do not mention the tears which our Lord shed in His agony ; but this affecting circumstance the Apostle has recorded as he noted a memorable saying of Christ's, which is not to be found in any of the Gospels, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' This is the third and last instance of His weeping recorded in Scripture, and His tears at this time were tears of agony, flowing from a breaking heart. No torture which men could inflict could make Him thus weep and cry. He wept and cried under the pressure of His Father's rod, to save you from the place of weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, and to procure for the children of sorrow that best of all consolations, 'God shall wipe away all tears from your eyes.'

These cries our Lord addressed to Him that was able to save Him from death. He now felt the power of God in punishing ; yet while the thunders of that power were roaring around Him, He thinks of its strength to save. He believed that the power of His Father could embolden Him against the mightiest host, support Him under the weightiest burden, and raise Him from the lowest degradation.

But what did your Lord solicit in these prayers, and how was He heard ? He prayed that, if it was possible, the cup might pass from Him. This cup contained all the anguish of a violent death, and all the curses of the broken law ; it was put into His hands as the sinner's substitute, and He was called on to wring out the dregs of it and drink them. From a task so dreadful His innocent human nature seemed to shrink. Human nature ever recoils from pain and suffering, and can only be brought to welcome it by a superior influence. If it had been otherwise with Him, it has been remarked, He could not have been said to have suffered, for nothing is suffering, or can be penal to us, but what is grievous to nature. This prayer indicated not the sinking of His fortitude, or the decay of His love, but the extremity of His anguish and the truth of His humanity.

And how was He heard in this prayer? It was not a prayer totally declining suffering. 'Thinkest thou,' said He to Peter, when He reproved the rashness which led him to draw the sword in His defence, 'that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He would presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels; but how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be.' But as this prayer was an expression of the horror of nature at the idea of suffering, it was answered in His heart being fortified against its terrors, and in that being rendered welcome which was the object of aversion. So immediate and complete was the answer, that with the next breath He adds, 'Nevertheless, not My will, but Thine be done.'

Ye are now reflecting on what must have been your fate had this cup passed from your Lord, and that thought will increase your gratitude to Him who saved you by a method so agonizing to Himself, and whose love to you was stronger than death.

Christ also deprecated the sinking of His human nature in the conflict. He saw that He had to contend with an infuriated populace, with crafty and violent priests, and with the powers of darkness, irritated to the utmost by their past defeats, and determined to put forth all their strength to destroy Him. But He had to bear also the fury of incensed Omnipotence. Affected with the tremendous prospect, and knowing the consequences of failure to His own glory and to the salvation of men, He cried, 'Save Me, O God, for the waters are come into My soul.' Hold up these hands till I have dashed Thine enemies in pieces; sustain this heart till I have made peace betwixt God and man, and let My blood flow till sin is washed away.

He was answered in this prayer, for there appeared an angel from heaven to strengthen Him. That angel came to dry up His tears, to brighten His prospects, and to invigorate His heart. Instead of sinking in the struggle, He was more than a conqueror; and our nature appears with a glory which shall be sought for in vain in the courage of the hero or the fortitude of the martyr. And shall not you raise the voice of rejoicing and salvation? 'The right hand of the Lord is exalted, the right hand of the Lord doth valiantly.'

But our Saviour deprecated also continuance under the power of death. It has been remarked, that the phrase to save from death signifies either preservation from an evil of which a man is in danger, or deliverance from one into which he has fallen. The idea of continuing under the power of death is horrible to nature. That the grave shall be our perpetual abode, and corruption and dust the end of man, are

fears which have harassed human beings in all ages ; and perhaps such thoughts as these might be thrown into our Lord's mind by the tempter : ' From the weight which crushes Thee to the dust of death, what hand shall relieve Thee ? To rot with criminals may be Thy fate as well as to die with them, and the scoff uttered at Thy cross may be repeated by those who pass by Thy grave, " He saved others, Himself He cannot save." ' In opposition to such suggestions, Jesus lifted up His voice to Him who quickens the dead, and calls the things which be not, as though they were. And rejoice that He was heard in this prayer. He was assured of being taken from prison and from judgment, and of being raised to a life not clouded by infirmity and suffering as before, but uniformly glorious and blissful ; a life to be spent in the enjoyment of His well-earned triumphs, and in the benevolent application of the promised salvation.

The Apostle remarks, that He was heard in that He feared. Reverence for God's majesty and justice, submission to His will, and zeal for His glory, were the principles which dictated and guided our Lord's prayers, and rendered them the delight of His Father.

Christians, you have been listening to your Lord's prayers ; and if ye are not dead to the eloquence of devotion in its most melting form, your hearts must be strongly impressed. You have reason to be ashamed that they are not more affected. When you hear the shriek of woe your heart shudders, and, in the place of weeping, the tear starts into your eyes ; and can any of you see the Saviour's tears and hear His cries unmoved ? These cries and tears were expressions of anguish which you deserved to suffer. He utters these strong cries, because He bears your griefs ; and His face is wet with tears, because He carries your sorrows. Let gratitude, repentance, and love, unite their influence in your hearts, in offering to Him a suitable sacrifice at His table, that in receiving it He may see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied.

When Hezekiah received the message from God by the prophet, ' Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die and not live,' he turned his face to the wall, and prayed to the Lord, and wept sore. The approach of death has made the mighty cowards, and watered the bed of state with tears. Eminent as he was for piety, he shuddered at the thought of death. But the prospect which made your Redeemer offer up strong crying with tears, was much more dismal than his. To Hezekiah death was to come in the form of disease, as the common lot of mor-

tals, as the instrument of happiness, and amid all the alleviations which power or wealth could impart; but to Jesus it came loaded with all the vengeance of the curse, and amidst the agony and shame of the cross. Hezekiah's prayer was answered in the addition of fifteen years to his life, and that of our Lord in length of days for ever and ever. You have seen Him crushed by anguish, behold Him now in paradise, the region of delight; on the throne, the seat of empire; and in His Father's bosom, the place of infinite tenderness and everlasting rest. He remembers every circumstance in the scene of sorrow, and that heightens His enjoyment. Eternity opens before Him a boundless prospect of glory and felicity.

There are some at the communion table to whom Jesus is now saying, 'Why weepest thou?' When the king of Persia said to Nehemiah, 'Why is thy countenance sad?' he was sore afraid. Haughty and unfeeling despotism deems the face of sorrow a reproach to its power; but Jesus asks the cause of your tears that He may remove it. You say that it is conscious guilt that troubles you; but if you have been washing His feet with your tears, to you He saith, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee; go in peace.' Let those who are happy in their Saviour maintain a holy caution. Beware of forming too flattering expectations of human life. From the mount of communion you behold all around you bright with sunshine, but the clouds will return. Afflictions will try your patience, and temptations your faith. Disappointments will try your spirituality of mind, and desertion your hope in God, and I call on you to prepare for these. Our Lord's days on earth were not days of ease and indulgence, and can you expect yours to be so?

Pray without ceasing, and pray as Jesus did. Think how Jacob wept, and made supplication at Bethel, and how as a prince he had power with God, and prevailed. Let yours be the effectual, fervent prayer of the righteous man, which availeth much. Guard against everything which may deprive you of the seasons, or indispose you for the duty of prayer. And despair not of an answer to prayer, for 'in due season ye shall reap if ye faint not.' You have an advocate with the Father, who will enforce your petitions; and if His prayers were prevalent on earth, they cannot fail in heaven. This is the character which God gives His people, 'My suppliants;' and beware lest, by your neglect of prayer, or your carelessness in it, you forfeit your claim to this appellation.

Rejoice that in the heavenly state Jesus 'still remembers His tears, His agonies and cries;' and though no friend on earth should remain to join his voice with your prayer, or to mingle

his tears with yours, you can look up to One in heaven who is touched with the feeling of your infirmities, and 'who suffered, being tempted, that He might know how to succour them that are tempted.' He delights to wipe the streaming eye, and to still the quaking heart. Confide in Him in the worst season. In the midnight hour consider that God dwells in the thick darkness, and in the wildest tumults of the storm, that His way is in the whirlwind, and that He sits on the floods. And show that the scenes of sorrow through which you have passed have taught you promptitude in mercy. You have been in the house of mourning; let the widow see that you know her heart, and the orphan that his loss is yours. Have you had affliction on your bodies, or temptations in your souls, let the sick and the tempted have as much as possible of your care. In studying the sympathy of our Lord, you must labour not only to catch its tones of tenderness, and its looks of pity, but to imitate its gifts and deeds of mercy.

Live in the fear of God. Did Jesus fear, and shall we have none. The frivolous and the giddy see nothing attracting in this principle. They say there can be no beauty in the sadness of the countenance, and no pleasure in the tremor of the heart; but it gives to the manner all the grace of modesty, and to the soul a calm and solid satisfaction. Its aspect is grave, and when it looks on folly it is with a frown, but its heart is true. Fear in Jesus was not attended with the misgivings of unbelief and of conscious guilt. Though He took on Him the form of a servant, He had not the spirit of a slave; and the temper of a son was apparent in all the tasks which He performed, and in all the sufferings which He bore. Cultivate this filial fear, and in religious worship it will keep you from levity and formality, in your recreations from folly and excess, and in the business of the world from every fraud. In company it will preserve you from that fear of man which suffers profanity to go on unchecked, and from that frivolity which will degrade your profession. In adversity it will render you still, and in prosperity it will make you dependent on God, and humble to man.

Beware of forming harsh conclusions about the piety of those who are afraid of death. It is not every saint who can defy the last enemy. When death stands by the bedside, lays his cold hand on thine, and orders thee to come away, thou wilt then find what a serious thing it is to die. But cry to God, and from His throne strength will come to the bed of languishing, and a ray shall descend on the dark vale. He will remove, or at least mitigate, your terrors. You are saved from sin,

from the world, and from hell already, and to this list of deliverances salvation from death shall be added. Take heed lest by folly or negligence, or any criminal act, you call up remorse to aggravate the horrors of the last hour. Give all diligence, by the constant exercise of every Christian grace, to make your calling and your election sure, and 'so there shall be administered to you an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of your Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.' Then you will have no calamity to weep over, no evil to dread, and no want to be supplied. The sentence which shall answer all your prayers, terminate all your sorrows, and reward all your services, shall then be pronounced on you, and shall call you as good and faithful servants to share in your Saviour's rest.

ADDRESS XCIII.

Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.—HEBREWS vi. 17, 18.

IN the hour of separation from his friend David, Jonathan made him swear to him this oath, 'Thou shalt not only, while I live, show me the kindness of the Lord that I die not, but thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever; no, not when the Lord hath cut off the enemies of David from the face of the earth.' Jonathan caused David to swear this again, because he loved him as his own soul. These assurances were gratifying as a testimony of David's friendship, and soothed Jonathan's mind amidst its sad forebodings of the calamities of his house.

The scene to which the language of the Apostle turns your attention, ye disciples of Jesus, is one which has far stronger claims on your hearts, than the most affecting incidents of human friendship. Small was the kindness which David, though a prince, could show, compared with His who is rich in mercy. It was kindness limited to earthly advantages. But the blessings which our God swears to bestow, are all spiritual blessings in heavenly places. Attentive as David was to this solemn pledge, yet death closes the eye of watchful kindness, and in that very day its thoughts perish. But the God who swears that He will bless His people, is One whose years and whose mercy can have no end.

Let me ask you, ye professed friends of Jesus, have you fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope that is set before you? 'I looked on my right hand, but there was no man that would know me; refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul.' Wherever I turned my eyes, I could see no shelter for my guilty soul, and no rest for my troubled heart. The whole scene around me seemed naked and dreary as the desert, where no tree gives its shadow, and no spring its waters. 'I cried to Thee, O Lord; I said, Thou art my refuge, and my portion in the land of the living.' Scarce had I said this, when His gracious hand took me in; and here I am not only safe, but happy. 'I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress; my God, and in Him I will trust.' My heart is now blessing that mercy which receives and saves the hopeless, helpless outcast, and which has received and saved me. I deserved to be driven from His gate, and to have had this answer returned to my knockings and my entreaties, 'Depart from Me, ye workers of iniquity; I know you not.' But the Father of mercies met me at that gate, and fell on my neck and kissed me. I am a monument to heaven and earth, of the power of His grace, and of the riches of His goodness.

How great is the consolation which the God of all grace opens to those who have thus fled from the wrath to come! It is not scanty, like the consolations of the world. To certain classes the world opens up scenes of enjoyment. To the young, the gay, and the prosperous, it exhibits all the allurements of pleasure; but for the poor it has the contempt of the proud; for the aged, all that is mortifying in neglect; for the wounded spirit, taunts which inflame it into madness, or sophistry whose false and momentary peace is succeeded by everlasting torment. But are the consolations of God small with you, ye believers in Jesus? 'A man shall be as rivers of water in a dry place, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.' Here oppressed innocence drops its burden, solicitude its cares, and terror its forebodings. 'They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house, and they shall drink of the rivers of Thy pleasure.'

Now, Christians, to convince you of the certainty of His purpose and promise to bless you, God hath confirmed them by His oath; 'I have made a covenant with My chosen; I have sworn to David My servant; thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations.' 'This is as the waters of Noah unto Me; for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah shall no more go over the earth, so I have sworn that I will not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee.'

These symbols of bread and wine now before you are seals of God's covenant. They are pledges that He will be ever mindful of it and of you; and while you contemplate the sorrows which Christ endured for your happiness, may your minds rise to the full assurance of hope.

Let the influence of religious consolation on you, show how well it deserves to be styled strong consolation. Such has been its power over the heart, that it has made the greatest pleasures of the world seem contemptible. It has made good men count it all joy when they fell into divers temptations. While sorrow drives others to the dark retreat of sullen despair, or while it closes the lips to all but blasphemy, the consolations of the Gospel put a new song into the mouth of the pious sufferer, and fit him for the services of religion and for the duties of society. Under their influence, youth tempted to sensual indulgence dashes on the ground the poisonous cup; despondence takes down its harp from the willows; cheerfulness enlivens the languid countenance of age; and the valley of the shadow of death is filled with all manner of pleasant fruits.

How amiable does religion appear in the peace and joy of her followers! When the tempest howls, and the face of nature is cold and dreary, we feel no inducement to go forth from our dwellings. It is the singing of birds, the verdure of the fields, and the clear and bright sky, which calls us to a scene full of the Creator's goodness. In like manner, it is the contentment, the tranquillity, and the benevolence of the good, which induce many to take hold of their skirts, and to say, 'We will go with you, for we have seen that God is with you.'

Let not any melancholy forebodings as to futurity damp your present consolation. Beware of staggering at the promise of God by unbelief. Shall a professed disciple of Christ offer an indignity to the God of truth so monstrous, as to doubt what He hath said and sworn? Let the language of your hearts be that of faith, bold and unshaken: 'Though darkness, sorrow, and desolation, should surround me, yet will I trust in the name of the Lord, and believe that He will give that which is good.' Say not, I could believe that He intended that I should be happy when He made my cup to overflow, and permitted me to enjoy communion with Himself; but I cannot think so when I have sorrow upon sorrow, and when for days no voice of mercy reaches my anxious heart. Remember the faith of Job, and honour God as he did: 'Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him; He also shall be my salvation for ever.'

Cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart. In forsaking Him of whom you have laid hold, you abandon your own mercy; your own and your father's Friend. You have laid hold of this hope, as Joab did of the horns of the altar, when he fled to the tabernacle of the Lord for safety, and have said, like him, to those that called him to come forth, 'Nay, but I will die here.' Let others say to the gold, Thou art my hope; lean on their own fancied excellence; count the scene of worldly indulgence their rest; and laugh at every idea of danger, as the idle foreboding of a melancholy enthusiasm;—I will abide in Christ, cleave to His testimonies, and follow Him whithersoever He goes. My trust in life, and my grasp in death, shall be on Him.

What can more strikingly show the value of the believer's consolation than its stability? The most trifling incident will mar the worldly man's enjoyment; but Thou, O God, wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee. 'I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man shall take away from you.' Some have called religious consolation a delusion; but that cannot be a delusion, which, under the most irritating treatment, keeps the good man calm and patient; which, in the most perplexing circumstances, makes his soul dwell at ease; which melts the heart in benevolent sympathy; and which follows, not even with a sigh, the departure of advantages on which the world sets the highest value. In this consolation may you live and die, and may you find it to be an everlasting consolation. Amen.

ADDRESS XCIV.

Ye are come to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant.—HEBREWS xii. 24

THIS is one of the peculiar privileges which distinguish the Gospel dispensation. Moses and Aaron acted as mediators betwixt God and Israel. To the Jews Moses made known the will of God, and for them he interceded in a manner very earnest and affectionate: 'Oh this people have sinned a great sin; yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin;—and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of the book which Thou hast written.' On a memorable occasion, when wrath went out from the Lord against Israel, and the plague was raging, Aaron took a censer, and put incense on it from the altar, and he made an atonement for the congregation. 'He stood betwixt the dead and the living, and the plague was stayed.' 'God said that He

would destroy them, had not Moses, His chosen, stood before Him in the breach, to turn away His wrath, lest He should destroy them.' In these solemn offices they were types of the Mediator of the new covenant; and all the virtue of their interference was derived from Him. To obtain our reconciliation to God, Jesus was not only willing to die, but was actually cut off from the land of the living. The plague was raging against us, and ere it could be stayed the Man Christ Jesus must be its victim. On Him it seized; it devoured His strength, and laid Him in the dust of death.

Contemplate, Christians, the necessity of your Lord's mediation, and what He did and suffered to make peace betwixt God and you. Conscience saw and felt the Almighty's anger; and to appease it had been the aim of men for ages. Various were the methods which they adopted for this purpose. It was for this purpose that incense smoked and victims bled, as if clouds of incense could hide from the Omniscient the crimes of mortals, or streams of blood extinguish the fire of His wrath. But 'we joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.' 'You that were sometime alienated, and enemies in your minds by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and unblameable, and unreprougeable in His sight.' Why, O Jesus, dost Thou lie prostrate and bleeding on the earth? It is because the chastisement of our peace was laid on Thee, and for the transgressions of Thy people Thou art stricken. Wrath comes on Thee to the uttermost, that, being justified by Thy blood, we might be saved from hell by Thee. The cross of Christ was the place of meeting betwixt heaven and earth. On that cross the dove alights, and fixes the olive branch. As the Sufferer's soul and body were separated, He saw mercy and truth meeting together, and God and His offending creature united in love. Justice and faithfulness present now no obstacle to the sinner's admission to favour;—mercy hath now its free course; and the heat of God's great anger is quenched in the blood of the cross;—love rejoices over its objects, and heaven and earth unite their songs to the God of peace.

Let me ask you, Have ye come to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant? You have come to His house and to His table; but have you approached Him in faith and penitence? Have you felt the necessity of His mediation? I saw myself condemned, and I heard the wrath of God denounced against me. The devouring surge was rushing to the spot where I lay, unable to make a single effort for my own escape; and

what could my feeble arm do to beat back the great sea billows? At that instant, when I thought the proud waters would have gone over my soul, a voice cried, 'Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further.' I could scarcely believe at first that I was safe, and the roaring of the waves kept alive the terrors of my heart; but the sound sunk gradually lower and lower: I lifted up my head, and rejoiced in God my Saviour. Heaven can only exceed the bliss of that moment.

If you have accepted of the mediation of Christ, you will be ashamed of that obstinacy and folly, on your part, which made so many arguments and so much entreaty necessary to induce you to do so. I heard the voice of God, 'Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me, and he shall make peace with Me.' Blessed assurance! The trembling despairing heart, that knows what it deserves from God, needs all the encouragement which it contains. I tried to stretch out the withered hand; I held Him, and I would not let Him go.

Are you determined to abide with Him? 'As the Lord liveth, and as my soul liveth, I will not leave Thee.' While I cling to Jesus, I am safe. The Mediator listens to your language of gratitude and affection. The feast of charity is prepared; the banner of love is waving; the God of peace is here, and thus He addresses you at His table: 'I am pacified to you for all that ye have done.'

'Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.' Rejoice, Christians, in your security from the wrath of God. United as you are to Jesus, and interested in His atonement, the sword of justice must pass through the Mediator's heart ere it can reach you. Prize the Almighty's smiles. Think by what they were obtained for you, even by the killing sorrows of your Redeemer. What a charm does the idea of reconciliation with God shed over every scene! It makes every comfort taste like the wine of the kingdom; nor can any place seem gloomy to that heart which hath this delightful consciousness, that the God of peace is here. God hath spoken peace to you; take heed lest ye turn again to folly. You may provoke your Father to anger: and from the sweetness of His smile, you may form some idea of the terror of His frown.

Be grateful to the generous Mediator. If a person has restored you to affectionate intercourse with a friend from whom you had been long separated, and in whose coldness and distance you found yourselves unhappy, you are eager to express your gratitude for the wisdom and the kindness which recon-

ciled you. Grateful nations celebrate the merits of him, who, by a peace of honour and security, liberates a country from the terrors and the ravages of war ; and shall the generous efforts of the Lord Jesus for your happiness be forgotten ? May His goodness have in you a heart memorial.

Cultivate a forbearing and peaceable temper to your fellow-creatures. Can a man, reconciled to God, be the implacable enemy of his brother ? Put no harsh constructions on the actions of your neighbours. A proud and jealous spirit finds insults in language and conduct, where none are intended. Listen not to the tale-bearer, whose delight it is to separate chief friends. ' Let all bitterness and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you with all malice. And be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you.' My young friends, let not the ardour of your spirits hurry you into contention. Aged Christians, put on meekness : ye have withdrawn from the bustle of life ; and let not the evil passions which agitate the world accompany you to your retirement. Your connections with the world are dissolving ; but let charity, the bond of perfectness, be kept firm.

Labour to promote peace wherever your influence extends ; and in the neighbourhoods where you dwell, be as a dew from the Lord, and not like firebrands, to kindle and to consume. Fret not that your efforts to make peace must be laborious and continued. ' A brother offended, is harder to be won than a strong city ; and their contentions are like the bars of a castle.' While some appear anxious to aggravate and to perpetuate dissension, to turn coldness into fury, and silence into abuse ; do all in your power to moderate and to appease wrath. ' Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God.'

Let the promises of that covenant, of which Christ is the Mediator, be your song in the house of your pilgrimage. Its blessings are your present, and shall be your eternal portion.

The hour of death will come ; and you may rejoice that the Mediator hath reconciled death to you, and can enable you to welcome him as a friend. I have made a covenant with death, says the wicked man, and with hell am I at agreement. I have made no covenant with death, exclaims the Christian, but with Him who conquered it ; with hell I am at perpetual war, but I have with heaven a peace that cannot be broken. The Mediator hath softened the severity of the stroke of death, and brightened the gloom of his lone retreat. How sweet is it to

lay the dying body at our Lord's feet, that He may place it in the grave; and to commit the departing soul to His arms, that He may conduct it to glory!

Soon shall you come to the Mediator of the covenant on His throne. About that throne there is a rainbow, the blessed symbol of peace; and as you approach to it, this encouraging voice shall quicken your steps, 'Well done, good and faithful servant, enter ye into the joy of your Lord.'

ADDRESS XCV.

Whom having not seen, ye love.—1 PETER i. 8.

WE are so much accustomed to the influence of sensible objects, that some rashly conclude that it is impossible to love one whom we have never seen, and are disposed to class affection to an invisible Saviour among the reveries of enthusiasm. But there are other modes of exhibiting the worth of an object as striking as its actual presence. It is not so much the external form of an object which excites regard, as the amiable qualities which it indicates. It is the benignity which softens the features, the sympathy which moistens the eye, and the wisdom which flows from the lips, by which our hearts are touched; and a most vivid impression of those qualities may be produced on those who have never seen their possessors, by the statements of those who have been associated with them.

When we go into the house of affliction, and are told of one whose liberality has supplied their wants, and whose skilful exertions have redeemed their lives from destruction, we do not remain cold and indifferent at the recital, because we have not seen the generous visitant. Our hearts swell at once with admiration of his goodness, and join in the blessings which are invoked on him by those who were ready to perish. When we survey the pillars which have been reared to commemorate the brave who have won the liberty, or the memorials of the genius which has adorned the literature of our country, we feel a degree of attachment to such characters as strong as ever was felt by any among whom they lived. The prejudices of party, and the surmises of envy, which so often darken the lustre of living men, seldom spread a shade over the illustrious dead. And shall it be deemed impossible for us to love the Lord Jesus Christ, of the excellencies of whose character we have such an affecting record in the sacred history, written by men

who saw His glory? They thus describe the object which they had in view in these details, 'These things which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us, that your hearts may glow with feelings akin to ours.'

I may add, that there are testimonies of regard to our interests, which may excite strong affection, though we have never seen the benefactor from whom they proceed. It is not even necessary that he live in the same country or the same age with us. It is enough that we behold in his bounty a picture of his heart. We feel it as a circumstance which strengthens our attachment to a distant benefactor, that, surrounded by objects calling for his kindness, he honoured us with the pledges of his regard.

The father who dies while his child is too young to recognize him, and who, before he departs, leaves his counsels for his direction, makes every provision in his power for his comfort, and orders a valuable pledge of his regard to be given to him when he arrives at maturity, is thought of by that son with affectionate veneration. These counsels strike him as if he heard them from a father's lips, and that pledge affects him as if he received it from a father's hand. And are not we surrounded with the tokens of our Saviour's regard to our interests? The ordinances of religion are stored with His blessings, and the earth is full of His mercy.

I trust I can appeal to you, Christians, and say, 'Him having not seen, ye love.' His excellence is such as to claim your best affection. History exhibits many estimable characters, fancy hath drawn many striking pictures of eminent worth, and heaven contains many bright angels and saints, made perfect; but in all things Christ hath the pre-eminence. As a Divine Being, He possesses all the brightness of the Father's glory, all the wisdom of an infinite understanding, all the might of omnipotence, all the beauty of underived excellence, and all the benignity of everlasting love. As man, how amiable is He in the beneficence of His life, the humility of His spirit, and the gentleness of His manners, in the condescension which counted no abasement too low, and in the patience which deemed no suffering too severe, for the happiness of the wretched! And as Mediator, He possesses every excellence to merit the Father's confidence, to consummate the plans of mercy, and to claim the sinner's trust.

In eminent characters among men, there is generally one excellence for which they are distinguished; and when you examine their other qualities you find them by no means superior

to those of others ; but the various excellencies of Jesus shine with the fullest glory.

In men we do not expect to find a combination of opposite excellencies. The hardness of the bold and the determined, is seldom associated with the gentleness and softness of the mild and the tender-hearted ; but in Jesus the beauty of holiness is mingled with candour and pity, the brightest majesty with the softest meekness, and the strictest justice with the richest grace. In the brightest human characters there is some defect ; but in the Sun of Righteousness there is no spot, in the Pearl of great price there is no flaw, and in the Rose of Sharon there is no thorn.

Many characters strike only at first. The gloss of novelty gives a power of attraction to many things which have no solid worth, and the language of disappointment and disgust soon succeeds that of wonder and ecstasy ; but the more Jesus is known the more He is loved. In the praise of other characters we suppose that flattery is often mingled ; but, amidst all that is said of Jesus, the heart is still conscious of the inadequacy of the description, and that the theme surpasses the power of language.

Now, Christians, what think ye of the Saviour ? An unsanctified mind cannot conceive His glory, and it cannot be the delight of a carnal heart. Once you saw no form nor comeliness in Him, but your eyes were opened, and your hearts were purified by His Spirit ; and since that happy change you have been convinced that His excellence is supreme and matchless, and you feel that in studying, admiring, and imitating it, you could find your eternal felicity.

But in what Christ hath done for you, He also claims your love ; and it is the consideration of what He hath done for us which encourages us to cling to Him as our friend. And let it not be said that this is a selfish principle ; for it is the benefactor's heart which love regards ; and it is the kindness of the Saviour, apparent in what He did, and in what He gives, which engages our affection. Meditate on the glory and felicity from which He descended, on the humiliation to which He stooped, and the anguish to which He submitted for you. Meditate on the melting sympathy of His heart, and the unwearied earnestness of His prayers ; on redemption by His blood, sanctification and comfort by His Spirit, victory by His grace, and eternal life by His righteousness, and you will feel how much you owe Him. And when you consider this kindness as manifested to creatures who deserved nought but abhorrence and indignation, it will heighten your grateful

wonder. I trust your hearts are now magnifying Him as the best of beings, and as the only Saviour. Memory, O blessed Jesus, will select Thy goodness for its tenderest recollection; and gratitude, Thy favours for its sweetest theme. The most valued of my friends shall be placed at Thy feet, and the throne of my heart shall be occupied by Thee for ever.

When I think on the baseness of the human heart, I am astonished that Jesus should ask its love, and do so much to gain it. He is the object of supreme affection to all the angels in heaven, yet doth He cast His eye on human beings, and say to them, 'Give Me thine heart.' Fix your eyes on a suffering Redeemer, and tell me why that heart groans, and why it is broken? It is to win yours. Our love cannot add to His happiness, but He requires it because it constitutes our own. Happy is he who is now saying, 'I will love Thee, O Lord, my strength;' and blessed shall he be who is attempting to say it, though with a trembling heart, and with a faltering tongue, for 'the bruised reed He will not break, and the smoking flax He will not quench, till He bring forth judgment unto victory.' The communion table is a place for reanimating languid affection, as well as for strengthening weak faith. Here the fire of heaven descends, not to destroy, but to fill the cold and dark heart with love and gladness. The fire has come down, and is consuming your corruptions and your fears, and making your hearts right in the sight of God.

Express your love to Him in the language of adoration and praise. To the most splendid crown which the earth could present to Him He prefers the blessings of those who are ready to perish. Sacrifice every corruption before Him, consecrate to Him every talent, and devote to Him every moment.

Remember the words of your Saviour, 'If ye love Me, keep My commandments.' Let your love be displayed in the cheerfulness of your obedience, and in your compliance with those precepts which seem the hardest sayings to flesh and blood. And let your obedience be constant. Love is not a principle operating in occasional bursts of rapture, which are succeeded by long periods of languor and indolence; but it acts with a steady influence on the heart and conduct.

Manifest your attachment to Jesus by love to the brethren. How is it that we show our attachment to a friend who is gone? It is by kindness to his connections; by aiding them, if they are helpless, guiding them by our advice, and redressing their wrongs, if they are oppressed. And it is by similar acts to the disciples that we must show our love to their Master

and ours. This is the grand distinction of Christian beneficence, that it is done for the sake of Jesus. It is love to Christ which has prompted those efforts of mercy by which so much misery has been removed, and so much happiness imparted. It hath raised up fathers for the orphan, provided an asylum for the outcast, brightened the gloom of the prisoner, and furnished the means of instruction to those 'who were perishing for lack of knowledge.' And what motive can be so animating to such conduct as this? 'Inasmuch as ye did it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto Me.' Consider the case of the poor, and be willing to distribute, and ready to communicate. The portion which is sent from your meals to poor neighbours, and the clothing which you give them, will be no loss to you, and will be a great comfort to them.

Adhere stedfastly and zealously to the cause of your Saviour. The contempt which is cast on those whom we love, and the injuries which are done to them, often affect us more than if we ourselves were their objects. When they are respected and flourishing, the heart swells with exultation; and it tends to reconcile us to neglect and to hardships that they are happy. Thus you must feel with regard to your Saviour. Let it be your prayer that every heart may love Him supremely, that every pursuit may point to His glory, and that every tongue may proclaim His praise. With Christ on the throne, the pious man can welcome the dust, and is contented to be nothing where his Lord is all. In opposition to the blasphemy which profanes His name, the heresy which depreciates His merits, the pride which scorns His grace, and the enmity which impedes the spread of truth and virtue, praise ye the Lord, glory in His cross, and labour to promote the knowledge and the practice of religion.

Let young disciples beware lest their love wax cold. You think this is impossible, but it has been the case with too many. Shall the kindness of your youth, and the love of your espousals, be all that can be said of your religion when you come to die? Let it be followed by the uniform piety of every future period; and let there never be reason to complain of you, that you have not realized the promise of your early days, and that 'you have left your first love.' Let those in middle life beware of the love of the world. Let not its cares overcharge the heart, or impede its devout movements; and let not its intercourse unfit you for those exercises which are so necessary to cherish holy feeling. And let the aged be lively and ardent in pious affection. It is truly delightful to see the dim

eye glistening at the praise of Jesus, and the failing heart swelling with the fervour of devotion.

Finally, Carry the love of Christ with you wherever you go. In prosperity, it will melt the heart and open the hand ; in the scene of strife and debate, it will maintain a generous forbearance and prompt a soft answer ; in the season of affliction, it will make you patient and thankful, and lift the thoughts from the pain that is suffered, and the property that is lost, to Jesus as the soul's rest and portion ; in the house of mourning, it will elevate the affections from the corpse inclosed in its coffin, or corrupting in its grave, to a living Redeemer on high ; and in the hour of death, it will lessen the pang with which you separate from all that is dear to you on earth, and make you willing to be absent from the body and present with the Lord. This will be the grand principle which will actuate the blessed when repentance shall weep, patience shall suffer, and faith and hope shall anticipate no more. And when you shall see your Lord as He is, your love to Him shall attain a strength and a tenderness more suited than what it at present has, to the worth and the kindness of the Lamb that was slain. 'Let us go on to perfection.'

ADDRESS XCVI

In whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.—1 PETER i. 8.

How various are the feelings of which our blessed Saviour is the object ! The emotions excited by any human being must be very limited, from the narrowness of his powers, and the imperfections which adhere to his best qualities ; but such are the excellencies, and such is the influence of our Redeemer, that to Him every principle of the renovated heart is directed, and finds in Him an appropriate object. The man who is the object of our dread we can seldom regard with confidence and hope ; and from the friend whom we love as our own souls, our bitterest vexations sometimes arise. Gratitude to an earthly benefactor is often attended with painful sensations arising from the inferiority which is connected with the receipt of favours, and from our inability to make a suitable return. But dependence on Christ is that state of mind in which the saint enjoys the most pleasing tranquillity ; that majesty of His which excites so much awe, confirms his trust in a power before

which all created might is less than nothing, and love to His name is attended with joy unspeakable and full of glory. If there is a pang felt in the exercise of this love, it is because it is so inadequate to its glorious object, and so far beneath what the good man would wish it to be.

I trust that I may thus address you : ‘ Ye are the circumcision, who worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and put no confidence in the flesh.’

Christians rejoice in the excellencies of their Saviour. Excellence produces joy in a virtuous mind, even where its display yields no personal advantage. The integrity which no prospect of gain can pervert, and no dread of loss can shake, the charity which opens its hand with wisdom, the purity which is superior to all the fascinations of sinful pleasure, and the fortitude which glories in tribulation, are contemplated with delight by the good, whether they are exhibited in real life or in the page of history. This delight is always heightened when we have any connection with its object. If it is the excellence of a relative with whom nature hath made us one, of a benefactor who hath honoured us with his notice, or of a friend whom we dearly love, we view it with exultation. Often hath the virtuous conduct of such a connection gladdened the aged amid the gloom and languor of solitude and infirmity.

But the excellencies of your Saviour are superior to all that man ever possessed, or fancy ever sketched. The pages of Scripture, and the songs of the blessed, are filled with His praise, who is the image of the invisible God. His character is adorned by all the beauties of holiness ; His goodness is unwearied in blessing ; and His heart, though He is on the summit of glory and felicity, is touched with a feeling of our infirmities and sorrows. Your minds have been taught to approve the things which are more excellent : you contemplate these qualities of your Lord with a high degree of pleasure ; and when the consciousness of your own depravity, and of the wickedness which prevails around you, fills you with horror, you feel, in looking unto Jesus, as a man does in turning from an object loathsome with disease, to one blooming in health and beauty. Your interest in Jesus heightens your delight ; for His wisdom is pledged for your guidance, and His power for your support : to His purity you are destined to be conformed ; and in His goodness and mercy you can trust for the supply of every want, and the relief of every sorrow.

Ye ought to rejoice, too, in the wonders which He hath wrought for you. Deliverance from great evils, and this accomplished in a manner which displays the courage or skill

of the deliverer in a striking light, are celebrated with rapturous joy. When David was returning from the slaughter of the Philistines, the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of music; and they answered one another as they played, 'Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.' But we must with a much higher joy contemplate Him who hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, from the tyranny of Satan, from the bondage of corruption, and from the wrath to come, not merely by putting His life in jeopardy, but by the sacrifice of Himself in a manner marked by peculiar agony.

The rapture felt by delivered nations is generally most vivid at first, while the remembrance of the miseries under which they groaned is most poignant. In the course of years the interest decays, or is supplanted by some new incident. But though so many hundred years have elapsed since our redemption was effected, it is as much adapted to excite joy as when it was achieved. Its importance cannot sink in the lapse of time. The ordinance of the Lord's Supper sets forth Christ before our eyes evidently crucified; and such is the power of faith, that it brings objects most distant from the past as well as from the future, and exhibits them before us in their most powerful attractions. I may add, that the application of this redemption to you is but of yesterday; and feeling, as you do at this moment, the efficacy of His redeeming blood, you are ready to exclaim, 'Sing, O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree that is therein, for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified Himself in Israel.'

The relations which your Lord sustains to you call for your joy. A peculiar pleasure is felt in a near relation to objects whose excellent qualities can render it honourable or advantageous; and high must be the joy which is felt in union to Him who is the first and the last in relations so intimate and tender. He is the Husband of His Church; and delightful is the tenderness of His regard, your community of interest with Him, and the indissoluble nature of this relation. He is the 'Friend that sticketh closer than a brother;' and ye have, I trust, the pleasing consciousness of His fidelity to your interests, and His tender sympathy in all your woes. He is your Advocate with the Father, who is ever attentive to your concerns, and ever solicitous for your welfare; and while He beholds all things under His sway, He disdains not to plead the cause of the poor and the needy. He is the everlasting

Father ; and how sweet is it to mark His care, and to enjoy His liberality ; to receive the testimonies of His approbation, and to feel, in that kind embrace with which He welcomes us back from our wanderings, that He is pacified toward us for all that we have done !

On topics so delightful as these let your thoughts now dwell. ' My meditation of Him shall be sweet, and I will be glad in the Lord. Eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart. Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous ; and again I say, Rejoice.'

' Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.' In communion with Jesus, a joy is felt which no earthly advantage can yield, and which no worldly evil can impair. It is only the man who tastes that the Lord is gracious who can form any idea of the tenderness of His language, or the kindness of His smile. In His presence the good man would find no gloom in a prison, no loneliness in a desert, and no terrors in death. The vows and engagements you have made to your Lord in this service, will give the faithful joy on reflection. It is said that ' all Israel sware to the Lord with a loud voice, and with shouting, with trumpets and cornets, and all Judah rejoiced at the oath ; for they had sworn with all their heart, and sought Him with their whole desire.' The consciousness of sincerity in this service, of that Divine influence by which we were stirred up to magnify and bless Him, and of God's acceptance of our homage, must be highly pleasing. ' Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than the wicked have in the time when their corn and wine abound.'

Some of you perhaps are saying, ' Oh that I could rejoice in these views of Christ ! but when I attempt it, the grand and awful representations of Him in Scripture rush into my mind, and fill me with dismay.' But in these representations a strong faith can discern reasons for joy. He is the King of kings ; but He is also the Prince of peace. He is the mighty God ; but He is able to save to the uttermost. His vesture is dipped in blood ; but it is the blood of your enemies. And when He speaks to you in threatenings, it is to warn you of dangers of which you are unconscious, and to induce you to abide in the refuge in which He hath placed you.

Rejoice in your Lord's offices. His teaching discloses the wonders of God's love, brightens the dark ways of Providence, and makes the benighted mind to know wisdom. Rejoice in His sacrifice ; for it is the triumph of His love, the conquest of your enemies, and the price of your salvation. And rejoice

in His reign ; for His yoke is easy, His sceptre is a sceptre of righteousness, and His throne is a throne of grace.

Rejoice in the promises which He has made to you. The most part of mankind feel more joy in hope than in possession : place before them a good which they deem valuable, and let the promise of it be worthy of their trust, and they will feel a joy in the anticipation, which will make the most arduous efforts for its attainment seem light. And when you think on the exceeding great and precious promises which your Saviour hath sealed with His blood, you will rejoice exceedingly. In these promises, your comfort and safety are secured in death and judgment. These are events, the idea of which saddens the gayest hours of the wicked ; and against these terrors presumption and infidelity furnish a poor defence. Jesus promises you a peace in death which the king of terrors cannot shake, and a triumph in judgment amidst the utter confusion of ungodly men. He promises you a happiness on high through eternity, in which you shall find gratification to all your wishes, and the glorious result of all that your Lord did for you on earth and in heaven.

How noble are the qualities of your joy ! Some have felt it to such a degree that they could not express it. This is the case with various emotions. Silence on such occasions is a far more striking and certain indication of the vehemence of the emotion than the strongest language which the lips can employ. But no language can convey a full idea of its power and sweetness. The compass of human language is wonderful. It can present the most splendid scenes of earthly pomp and enterprise before the imagination, with all the liveliness and strength of reality ; but it cannot exhibit in its due extent the peace which passeth understanding, and the joy with which the stranger doth not intermeddle. It is only the language of heaven which will be adequate to describe what the presence of Christ inspires, and what the spiritually-minded feel.

Your joy is glorious in its nature. I will not compare it with the joy of the wicked man in sin, which is vile and detestable ; nor with that of the worldling in his indulgences, which is mean and grovelling. But compare it with the joy which is felt in the acquisition of knowledge, or the endearments of friendship, and, behold its superiority ! It does not arise from the mere workings of natural feeling in the heart, but is the fruit of the Divine Spirit,—it is akin to the delight in God which is felt by angels and archangels.

How glorious is the influence of this joy ! Carnal joy often discovers itself in excesses of folly ; it so softens the heart as to unfit it for any effort of self-denial, or any exertion that is

laborious and troublesome, and renders it peculiarly susceptible of the influence of temptations to pride and sensuality. But this joy makes the heart condemn every carnal allurements, and gives it such vigour and such courage, that it will welcome the most difficult duty, and sustain the severest trial.

It detracts much from the value of any object when it is transient in its nature; and such is the character of all carnal joy. 'The triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment.' It does not even last till death; for the most frivolous incident will mar it, and continued indulgence produces disgust. But though the joy of the saint may not possess at all times the same degree of vigour, he is at no time left comfortless. Wonderful is the power of that joy, which the winter of adversity cannot wither, nor the evil days of age destroy. And your joy shall be eternal as its object. It is the beginning of the felicity which will be felt when the glory of Immanuel shall be seen by you unveiled, when, in the city of the living God, you shall bear a part in the song of the Lamb, when your love shall be purified from every fear, and your bliss be placed beyond the reach of change or termination.

Beware of everything which may tend to mar your joy. Guard against unbelief, for this will impede your joy, by questioning the excellence of its object, or your interest in it; and against a worldly spirit, for this will make you disrelish things spiritual and heavenly. Neglect no duty, for every such omission will give rise to many painful reflections; and never yield to temptation to sin, for this will fill you with remorse and fear. Show to all around, that religion is not, as the wicked assert, a series of gloom and sadness, of outward austerities and inward struggles, mingled only with a few bursts of enthusiastic ecstacy, but that it makes you happy in all circumstances. Invite them to taste and see that God is good, and while in trying whether the wicked are happy they incur much guilt, and may receive much injury, in going with you they will enter into rest.

Arise from this ordinance, and go on your way rejoicing, as the Ethiopian convert did, when 'baptized into Christ;' and labour to comfort others with those consolations with which you are comforted of God. 'Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions to them for whom nothing is prepared, for this day is holy unto our Lord; neither be ye sorry, for the joy of the Lord is your strength. Rejoice evermore.'

ADDRESS XC VII.

Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises.

2 PETER i. 4.

CHRISTIANS, you are now assembled to celebrate God's performing the mercy promised to the fathers, and His remembering His holy covenant. While you are thus employed, allow me to direct your minds to the promises of grace and consolation which God has given you in His word, and by which He speaks peace to His saints at His table.

Contemplate these promises of the Gospel in their connection with your Lord. To Him they were all first made: 'In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised us in Christ before the world began.' He is the glory of the promises, and His name sheds lustre over them. The salvation they exhibit, it was the purpose of His heart from eternity to bestow. His precious blood was the price by which all the blessings contained in the promises were purchased. He pleads them in His intercession with the Father, and dispenses the benefits they contain, in His regal munificence as the ennobled Prince and Saviour.

The grace of Christ is the essence of the promises; and for His salvation they all are stored. He indeed fills all in all. He fills all graces; faith with strength, and love with fervour, hope with vigour, and patience with steadfastness. He fills all ordinances; prayer with fervour, and preaching with efficacy, meditation with sweetness, and praise with gratitude. He fills heaven with glory, and earth with mercy; time with comforts, and eternity with triumphs. And He fills all promises: In the promise of pardon, we see His blood; in the promise of comfort, His sympathy; in the promise of acceptance, His righteousness; in the promise of protection, His arm; and in the promise of perseverance, His universal care.

It is from Jesus that the promises derive all their influence to console and to purify. He also is the stability of the promises, for 'they are all in Him, yea and amen, to the glory of God by us.' And He is the end of the promises; for, in the enjoyment of Him in glory, all of them will have their consummation.

Contemplate the promises of the Gospel in the blessings which they exhibit. Is pardon of sin a blessing of the greatest value? It screens us from the vengeance of God, and delivers from the lowest hell. Think how amply this is promised and

sealed in the Lord's Supper. 'This cup is the New Testament in My blood, shed for remission of sins unto many.' Is adoption a blessing of great value? It translates the children of wrath into the family of heaven, and makes them heirs of God. With the voice of love, Jehovah says, 'I will be a Father to you.' Are the graces of the Holy Spirit of great value? The promises contain them all. In this ark we see lying the shield of faith, the anchor of hope, the girdle of truth, the ornament of humility, and the breast-plate of righteousness. Nay, in this blessed ark, we behold laid up the celestial palm, the sceptre, and the crown, the manna which shall be eaten, and the white robes which shall be worn in the land of glory. Is peace of conscience a blessing of great value? 'A wounded spirit who can bear?' What external incident can make him miserable, whose soul is at rest? Reflect, while the symbols of Christ's sufferings are before your eyes, on that declaration so encouraging to the heart: 'If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot unto God, purge your consciences from dead works, to serve the living God?' Communion with God is a privilege you highly value. You have come to the table of Jesus, saying, 'My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God.' Lay the promises of His presence before Him, saying, 'Remember the word to Thy servant, on which Thou hast caused me to hope.' 'If any man love Me, he will keep My words, and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make our abode with him.'

The devotion of your souls has, I trust, led you to the great Author of the promises, from whose heart they flow, by whose lips they were uttered, in whose word they are recorded, and in the dispensations of whose providence and grace they are accomplished. My crimes called for the voice of wrath. Had I received the due reward of my deeds, all the curses written in Thy book would have been my portion; but, O my Father and my God, I am lost in wonder when I think on the gifts Thou hast bestowed on me, on the wonders Thou hast wrought for me, and on the promises Thou hast made to me. 'What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits towards me? I will take the cup of salvation; I will call on the name of the Lord.'

How sweet is the consolation which the promises of the Gospel yield! Among the disciples of Jesus, there sits a widow who has lost the guide of her youth, and has been left with

few friends to care for her or her helpless children. What was it that supported thy heart, when the possessor of thine gave his last sigh; when thy hand was laid upon his eyes; and when his remains were conveyed from thy dwelling to their long home? What is it that bears up thy spirit when thy children cry for their father, and entreat thee with sobs and tears to conduct them to him? What is it which animates thy noble exertions to provide for them the comforts of the present life, and to point out to them the path that leads to a better? I hear thy answer to these questions, It is the gracious promise of my God, 'Leave thy fatherless children; I will preserve them alive, and let thy widows trust in Me.'

Among the disciples of Jesus, there sits also one, who, by the misconduct of his connections in business, has lost his worldly property, and who has seen the wealth he had acquired by honest and virtuous industry, dissipated by folly, or pilfered from him by the basest arts. The fair prospects of his children are blasted, and nothing opens before him but toil, to which his strength is unequal, or dependence, at which the heart sickens. What is it that enables thee to possess thy soul in patience, and to trust that thou shalt never be seen forsaken, nor thy seed begging bread? I hear thy answer: 'My God shall supply all my wants, according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.' I have seen at this table stronger ground for my hope, while contemplating the sufferings of the Son of the Highest. 'He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?'

Contemplate the promises in the relation which they bear to the graces of the Holy Spirit, and in their influence on them. They are the firm ground on which hope casts her anchor, and the resting-place where patience reclines. Here grow the fruits by which faith is nourished, and the branches in which joy sings. Here rises the summit from which heavenly-mindedness descries the land that is afar off. Here also is the secret place where repentance weeps, and mourns before Him who doth not despise the broken and the contrite heart. She presses to her heart the reviving assurance, 'Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.'

How powerful is their influence on sanctification! 'Having these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.' Consider how they appeal to every principle of gratitude within you. Has God made such promises of happiness to me, and shall not I labour to glorify Him? The

promises are given, that we through them might be partakers of a Divine nature, and escape the corruption that is in the world through lust. If any man claims an interest in the promises, and talks with confidence of the consolation and the hope which they give him, while his heart burns with the passions of hell, and his life is stained with the pollutions of the world, his pretensions are false and audacious. It is godliness which hath the promise of the life which now is, and also of that which is to come.

Let the promises of the Gospel, Christians, be frequently read and carefully studied by you. Mark with attention those which present themselves to your view as you search the Scriptures, and observe the particular situations to which they refer, that, when Providence places you there, you may have recourse to them. Let the promises of the Divine Presence accompany you as you go to the house of the Lord. In the hours of labour, think of Him who undertakes to prosper the work of your hands; and in the midst of your families, let your reflections often turn on the assurances which God has given, of the delight which He will testify in the culture and prosperity of the domestic virtues.

Complain not of the delay of the accomplishment of the promises. 'The Lord is a God of judgment, and blessed are all they that wait for Him.' Loaded as you are with benefits at present, and permitted to enjoy the happiness of futurity in the anticipations of faith and hope, impatience is in you most unreasonable and ungrateful. Its peevish repinings will be the torment of the heart that listens to them. Never doubt the stability of the promises. Calvary must be forgotten by you, when you imagine that He will break His covenant, or alter the word which has gone out of His lips. 'He that believeth not, hath made God a liar.' From impiety so monstrous, and from every approach to it, your hearts must shrink.

Regard with contempt the fairest promises of Satan and of the world. My young friends, to you this caution is peculiarly necessary; for experience hath not yet taught you the deceit of their lips, nor the malice of their hearts. Thousands around you are cursing the hour when, by listening to them, they were ruined.

Keep ever in remembrance the promises you have this day made to God, of attachment to His cause, and of obedience to His law. Fidelity is the last of the weightier matters of the law spoken of by our Lord. Maintain it in all situations, and implore the aids of His grace, the mercy and truth which will preserve you, that you may daily perform your vows.

ADDRESS XCVIII.

Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.—1 JOHN iii. 1.

CHRISTIANS, you are now in your Father's house, and are about to partake of the children's bread, and it becomes you to reflect with devout wonder, and with fervid gratitude, on the kindness of God to you in receiving you into His family. I trust it is your wish to contemplate this marvellous grace in the humble and affectionate spirit of the disciple whom Jesus loved.

How wonderful does this adopting love appear, when you consider your state and character by nature! We had lost the image and rebelled against the authority of the Being that formed us, connected ourselves with the family of the devil, and were the slaves of corruption and the children of wrath. That such creatures should be rescued from destruction was great love, but that God should make them His children is grace that passeth knowledge. You see how unwilling men are to take those into their families whom they consider as beneath them in station, or unworthy of them in character; but behold God raises the outcast from the fearful pit of guilt and wretchedness to a place in His house, and makes the language of enmity, terror, and despair, to be succeeded by the cry, 'Abba, Father.'

This love will appear wonderful, if we consider the glory of Him who adopts. How vast is the distance betwixt Jehovah and the highest creatures, betwixt the infinite and eternal God and beings finite, derived, and dependent! He needed not our services for His glory and happiness, for He could have formed by one effort of His power beings nobler in nature and qualities than men, and have placed them round His throne; yet did He look with pity on the sinner lying in his blood; and while He never uttered one expression of mercy to fallen angels, addressed to us this language, 'I will be a Father to you.' 'Seemeth it,' said David, 'a small matter to be son-in-law to a king, seeing I am but a poor man, and lightly esteemed;' but the most splendid alliance which mortals can form, is not once to be compared with that which connects the children of the dust with the Lord of all.

This love will appear most wonderful, if you consider the manner in which this privilege was procured. Infinite wisdom could alone devise a method for conferring it consistently with the glory of His character, and the demands of His law for

vengeance on us ; and the plan it formed was this : that the Son of God should assume the likeness of sinful flesh and the form of a servant, endure the curse which we deserved, and purchase every blessing which could render us holy or happy. Sweet, O Christian, is your Father's pity, but not one gleam of it visited your suffering Lord. Your afflictions are a Father's corrections, but the sufferings of Christ were the vindictive strokes of incensed Omnipotence. Your glorious liberty was obtained by His being bound as a criminal, and nailed to the cross ; and He was a homeless wanderer that you might dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. Men, in their folly and caprice, may give what is of great value for the attainment of a trivial object ; but when He, who is infinitely wise and just, sent forth His Son, born of a woman, and made under the law, that we might receive the adoption of children, we may rest assured that this interposition was worthy of His character, and that the end accomplished by it shall be to the praise of the glory of His grace. Behold the value of this blessing in these agonizing sorrows, and in that broken heart of your gracious Saviour, and admire the generosity of His love, who, so far from regarding your adoption with jealousy, or scorning you as a dishonour to His Father's house, suffered 'in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and unblameable, and unproveable in His sight.'

The privileges of this relation render this adopting love wonderful. Angels share with you in your name, but you have privileges which they cannot possess. Your adoption connects you with the Lord Jesus by ties more close than those by which He is connected with angels. God is yours in a fuller sense than He is theirs. You have a place in the covenant which they cannot occupy, feelings at the communion table which they cannot participate, and a song of praise which they cannot sing. It is true that they have no experience of your sorrows, but they know not the comforts of that mercy which heals the broken-hearted, nor the renovating power of repentance unto life. There is not a blessing in the great salvation which He will deny you, nor a moment of your being which is not marked by His bounty. 'If children, then heirs ; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.'

How wonderful does this love appear in the manner in which adoption is bestowed. Glorious and blissful as this privilege is, ye were unwilling to receive it, and were altogether unqualified for its duties and enjoyments ; but by His Spirit God conquered your aversion, effaced from you the image of Satan, and formed you to goodness, righteousness, and truth. He

implanted in you that love and reverence, that trust and joy, that zeal and benevolence, which characterize His family. These are graces by which God is honoured, and you are blessed; and He formed them not in a heart that was innocent and uncorrupted, but in one which was alienated from the life of God, bent on the violation of His law, and prone to malice and envy. This blessed change taught you to appreciate the value of Jehovah's smile, to find enjoyment in duties and scenes which to carnal men are irksome and gloomy, and to look forward to eternity for a home.

And is not the perpetuity of this blessing astonishing? There have been instances in which a father has been induced to disinherit a prodigal son, whom neither kindness, nor menaces, nor corrections could reclaim from utter profligacy, and to expel him from his house and presence; and you now tremble at the thought that your unworthy conduct may provoke God to cast you off for ever. There were morning stars which fell from the firmament, and sons of God who were cast out of heaven, but such events shall not again occur. The grace of God shall keep you from the excesses of the reprobate, His corrections shall reclaim you from your wanderings, and in His ordinances He shall confirm you in every holy tendency. You are now saying, 'Bless me, even me also, O my Father;' and if you ask this for His sake who was made a curse for you, and in that meek and lowly spirit which would be thankful for the crumbs which fall from His table, it will be granted, for your Father delights in mercy.

It was a memorable answer which the kings of Midian delivered to Gideon, when he asked what manner of men they were whom they slew at Tabor, 'As thou art so were they, each one resembled the children of a king.' There was a majesty in their form and manner which shed lustre over the obscurity of their condition. And such is the testimony borne to the saints of God even by the consciences of their enemies; for, reluctant as they are to admit their worth, they are compelled to acknowledge it by the force of their convictions, and to declare that God is in them. This acknowledgment they make, though it condemns the cruelty with which they treated them, and though it must be accompanied with the severest censure of their own misconduct by their own hearts. It is made in circumstances too serious for deceit or mockery, and when the suspicion of its being dictated by any sinister purpose is obviously inadmissible.

But what are the characters of the children of the King of

heaven, by which you ought to manifest that you belong to that family? Purity is the first which I shall mention. 'God is holy in all His ways;' and their hearts, sanctified by the grace of God, are pure in their wishes, affections, and purposes; and their lives, guarded by the control, and animated by the influence of religion, are consistent and exemplary. As obedient children, let every part of your Father's will be duly regarded by you, and abstain from all appearance of evil. The sanctity of manners which you maintain may be called hypocritical preciseness, or superstitious austerity; but 'Wisdom is justified of her children.'

Benevolence is another feature in their character. God is the Father of mercies; and were their power equal to their wishes, they would make every house of mourning to rejoice. God hath given them a melting heart; and their happiness lies not in amassing wealth, but in doing good and communicating. While the wicked, by their malice and revenge, show that they are the children of their father the devil, who was a murderer from the beginning, 'love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, that ye may be the children of your Father who is in heaven, who maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.'

They resemble the children of a king in majesty. Though many of them are poor and despised in the world, there is such a superiority in their spirit and views to the base and sordid, as proves that they are born from above. Show that, while your religion inclines you to be meek, and patient, and humble, yet in these virtues there is nought that is abject, cringing, or dastardly. That is a noble mind which poverty cannot crush, and oppression cannot awe, and which maintains the calm dignity of wisdom, integrity, and fortitude, in the most adverse circumstances.

And they are like the children of a king in influence. Such is their power with God, that their prayers are of much avail; in the world, that they are the chariots and horsemen of Israel; and over their own hearts, that, instead of being the sport of passion, they rule over their own spirits. Your influence with God, O Christian, is greatest when your own unworthiness is most deeply felt. He will deny you nothing which His grace in you solicits, or which your happiness requires.

Remember whose image and superscription you once bore. It was the image of the earthly Adam, nay, the likeness of the devil, for his spirit and works were yours. But let your whole soul magnify His name, who stripped off 'the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and put on you the

new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness.'

Think not that the transports which you now feel are a sufficient tribute to His adopting love, for it claims your eternal admiration and praise. Cast not away in your future days your wonder on trifles; but manifest the superior wisdom to which religion hath led you, by despising all that excites the idle curiosity, or the short-lived admiration of the giddy and the carnal, and contemplating with increasing interest scenes which the songs of heaven call great and marvellous. Beware of pride and vain-glory. To consider what you have been, and what you ought to be, will tend much to promote humility. Advance daily in resemblance to God. Let the ministers of religion be able to bear you this testimony, that you are epistles of Christ, transcripts of His doctrine, character, and law, and to rejoice in you as partakers of a divine nature. To see you the sons of God without rebuke, is their earnest wish now, and shall be their joy and crown hereafter.

Grow in love and reverence to your heavenly Father. Listen to the voice of the Redeemer from His cross. 'O love the Lord, all ye His saints.' Shall such a Father have the lowest of our reverence, or the coldest of our love? Love your Elder Brother more, for you have not yet given Him all your heart; and be this moment, and for the future, more entirely His. And remember, that it is by the conformity of His people to His image, that Christ is most highly honoured as the First-born among many brethren. See that you love one another with a pure heart fervently. Ye are one in your Father's heart, in the care of the Redeemer, and in the unity of the Spirit; and never let pride or envy alienate you from each other. Like members of one family, take the deepest interest in the welfare of your brethren, behold their sorrows with a brother's pity, and seek their improvement with a brother's solicitude.

Turn away your eyes from beholding vanity. There is not an object in the worldly man's possession which deserves your envy, even though that passion might be indulged with innocence; and, with such a goodly heritage as yours, it is most sinful to repine that aught is withheld, and foolish to be influenced by the denial of it, to attach to it a value which it does not possess.

Ye are now to arise, and to pursue your journey through the wilderness; but rejoice that you are going home, and that your Father is with you. You have seen a child travelling by a father's side; and you know how he soothes and animates him by the voice of kindness and hope when he is impatient and

languid—how he points his eyes to the lofty spires or green hills of the place to which he is going, and how he aids him in climbing the mountain, or passing through the mire. And ‘they that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not weary, they shall walk and not faint.’

Be of good comfort in the prospect of old age. Then the body of man no more resembles the bloom and strength of youth, than the nakedness of the tree in winter does its luxuriance in the spring; but the beauties of holiness are then as bright as ever. In the old man stooping to the grave, you see the prelude of death and of immortality.

And be of good comfort in the hour of death. It is to your best friends that you are going; and this is the language in which you can speak of your departure—and selfish and impious is the sorrow which would murmur at your removal,—‘I go to my Father’s house, and to my Saviour’s joy.’ What you were, conscience will often remind you; what you now are, it is the work of gratitude to tell; but what you shall be, faith can only anticipate in part. This is the sum of your happiness; but who can tell all that it contains? ‘So shall we be for ever with the Lord.’ This is the hope that enraptures your heart, ‘As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness; and when I awake, I shall be satisfied with Thy likeness.’ Perhaps some of you are ready to say, ‘O Lord, let me behold Thy face in mercy, but to see Thee in righteousness can be no joyous hope to me;’ but you shall see His justice cordially assenting to your happiness, and prepared to allot and to maintain your inheritance in glory. In the grave, corruption shall disfigure you; no trace of what you now are, shall be left in the consuming flesh, and in the crumbling bones; but Christ shall fashion your vile bodies like to His own glorious body, and you shall reign with Him in life for ever. Amen.

ADDRESS XCIX.

To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.—REVELATIONS ii. 17.

It was a glorious prophecy with regard to Cyrus, which the Lord of old delivered by the Prophet Isaiah: ‘Thus saith the Lord to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of

kings, to open before him the two-leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut. I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: and I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.' This employment of Cyrus, great and important as it was, is not worthy to be compared with the conflicts of the obscurest saint with the rulers of the darkness of this world, and with the corrupt propensities of his own heart. And how low seems the reward of Cyrus in the treasures of darkness, to yours in the hidden manna, in blessings which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard? Cyrus, in accomplishing the purposes of Heaven, was like the lightning in its course of ruin. He was unconscious of the hand which guided him, and which prepared his way. But the hearts of the good are in their Lord's work, and His law is within their souls.

What think you, my friends, of the combats of religion? Would you rather struggle with Christ, than triumph with the world? Would you rather suffer with Christ, than reign with the wicked? Every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; yet sweeter to me is this confused noise than the laughter that is mad, or the songs of wanton gaiety: and better to me are these garments than the covering of tapestry, or the fine linen of Egypt, with which sensual pleasure decks her couch.

Your contest with your spiritual enemies is arduous. A mind torn with anxiety, a pillow watered with tears, ordinances embittered by frightful suggestions and the scoffs of cruel pride, are often the attendants of this conflict. Satan's temptations are adapted with the utmost skill to the constitutional bias, and proposed in the most plausible manner, and in the most urgent form. Paul himself besought the Lord thrice that the messenger of Satan might depart from him. How painful is the struggle with that pride which religious attainments are apt to foster; that envy which is so likely to awake at the superior successes of a brother; that indolence which makes duty a burden; that despondence which deems all exertion unavailing; and that carnality which cleaves to the dust! How difficult is it to struggle with unreasonable men, to dispel the darkness of prejudice, to oppose the wide-spreading rage of fashionable folly, and to prefer the afflictions of the saints to all that the world can offer! And what a serious conflict is the Christian's conflict with the last enemy! The sweat bursting through every pore; the convulsive shaking of every limb;

the earnest elevation of the failing eye and the trembling hand; and the often-repeated cry, Help us, O God of our salvation!—prove that this is no easy struggle.

But rejoice, ye good soldiers of Jesus Christ, in the hope of victory. 'In all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us.' He will strengthen you with all might, and endow you with all wisdom. It is by that blood of the Lamb, the shedding of which ye are now commemorating, that you overcome.

Contemplate the rewards which Jesus will bestow on His faithful soldiers. In beauty, how enchanting! in possession, how sure! in bestowal, how free! and in worth, how great! They shall eat of the hidden manna. The manna which was rained on Israel was a type of the influences and comforts of the Saviour's grace. It beautifully exhibited these in its heavenly descent and in its nourishing qualities. It is supposed that it is called the hidden manna, because it was put in a golden pot, and kept in the most holy place, secret from every eye. And with the joys of religion a stranger doth not intermeddle. The sense of that love which is better than life, the delightful impression of Christ's sympathy, the pleasure which flows from the feelings of devotion, from the testimony of conscience, and the assurance of salvation arising from the seal and the witness of the Holy Spirit, are included under this figure. Are your souls hungering for this manna? This bread of life is sweet indeed to the longing soul! and most invigorating to the fainting heart! May you be able to say, 'Thy hidden manna was found of me, O Jesus, and I did eat it, and it was to me the joy and the rejoicing of my soul.'

Jesus promises to give to His faithful soldiers the white stone. John is supposed to refer here to a custom among the Greeks and Romans. When the people gave their suffrages for the condemnation of a criminal, they cast a black stone into an urn; and for his acquittal they threw in a white one. The expression, therefore, intimates that their Lord will give them a complete acquittal from all the charges which have been brought against them. Some experience of this the saints have even in the present state. It is at some happy moments, often at the communion table, that they can exclaim, 'It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?' But at the day of judgment this acquittal shall be announced in the fullest and most decisive manner. The sentence of judgment shall vindicate you from every calumny, wipe from your names every foul imputation, silence every accuser for ever, and crown

you with everlasting glory. This white stone you shall wear as a jewel in that diadem which Christ will place upon your heads; and its beauty and its lustre shall be perpetual as the diadem itself.

But Jesus will give you the new name. The allusion is supposed, in this expression, to be to the custom of princes, who give new names to those whom they have raised to peculiar dignity, and to familiar intercourse with themselves. And what are the titles by which Jesus distinguishes His own? He calls them the blessed of His father, and the chosen of His heart; the purchase of His blood, and the champions of His cause; the children of His care, and the sharers of His joy. These are not empty names, like many of the titles bestowed among men. Is it a name of honour? It is joined with the most distinguished exaltation. Is it a name of influence? It is accompanied with the most extensive powers. Is it a name of admiration? It is associated with the most estimable qualities. Is it a name of friendship? It is followed with the most endearing intimacy.

The high-sounding titles of men pass quickly away. Engrave them ever so deep on the lofty pillar, how soon are they defaced! Scarce has fame fixed one favourite on her slippery place, and sounded his name from her trumpet, ere she thrusts him down to make way for another. But they that stand with the Lamb on Mount Zion shall never be moved.

Your enemies make these privileges and hopes the objects of their derision; but the day is coming when they shall see them, and gnash with their teeth, and melt away.

Remember, Christians, what Jesus suffered to obtain for you these privileges. He was fed with the bread of tears, to procure for you this hidden manna; made of no reputation, to obtain for you this new name; and to procure for you this white stone, He was condemned by Jews and Gentiles.

Arise from the table of Jesus, to carry on your spiritual warfare with more alacrity than ever. The words of the angel of the Lord to Gideon, he now addresses to His good soldiers, 'The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.' Satisfy not yourselves with saying, in general, 'The people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits;' but apply it to yourselves: and say not with the presumption that goes before defeat, but with that reliance on the aid of Heaven, which makes the feeble strong in the power of His might, 'Through God we shall do valiantly; for He it is that shall tread down our enemies before us.' You have seen the wax melting before the fire, and the dust scattered by the breeze;

and in these you see how your enemies shall perish, and how their mightiest efforts against you shall come to nought. In a short time your last combat will come; and can you bear the thought of its closing on you in dishonour, with your armour broken, and your garments spotted by the flesh? The hero who expires in the arms of victory, is extolled as the noblest of human beings, and in his praise pillars of memorial raise their heads to the skies; but what is he to the saint who dies with Satan under his feet, and who, from the arms of death, springs upward to immortality?

You are disposed sometimes to complain that you are allowed at present so little of His hidden manna. But thus God tries your faith and patience, and thus He raises your longings for that world where this manna shall be so far from ceasing, that it will fall in greater abundance than ever it fell here. Fellowship without a medium, and beauty without a veil; love without a frown, and confidence without a suspicion; joy without mixture, and glory without end, are the privileges of heaven. Rejoice in hope of the glory of God, and of seeing and sharing the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

ADDRESS C.

After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.—REVELATION vii. 9, 10.

WHAT an interesting view of the worshippers and of the worship of heaven! The contemplation of this scene will assuredly give fervour to our devotion, and expansion to our charity.

Contemplate the number of these worshippers! The language of the Apostle conveys the idea of the vastness of it, 'A multitude, a great multitude, a great multitude which no man could number.' The enemies of Christianity have often represented it as a scheme which exhibits the Deity as aiming at the happiness of a few, and consigning, without mercy, almost the whole of our race to perdition. And perhaps the dark and contracted notions of certain religionists have furnished them with some plausible arguments for supporting this imputation. But what was the design of the great Author of our faith? It was to bring many sons to glory. For whom did Jesus die? 'He was once offered to bear the sins of many.' To whom does He

wish His salvation offered? He orders repentance and remission of sins to be preached in His name to all nations; and if little has been done in this respect, it must be ascribed to this, that men have been more eager to increase their temporal advantages, than to make known the grace which brings salvation, and that few hearts have glowed with the benevolence of the Saviour. The result of the mediatorial scheme, is stated by the Apostle in language the most gratifying to the spirit of charity. The worth of the Lamb shall not be sung by a few solitary individuals; nor shall that song rise before the throne low and feeble, it shall be the anthem of the nations of them that are saved, and shall be louder than the sound of many waters, and of mighty thunder.

But from whence came this vast multitude? From all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues. Every tribe on earth shall send forth soldiers to Messiah's standard, and every language of the world shall proclaim His glory. Around the throne hostile tribes shall meet in perfect friendship; and those who were once despised as barbarians shall be hailed as brethren. The gentleness of Christ shall conquer the ferocity of the savage; the prejudices of the idolater shall fall before the wisdom of the just; and even the pride of philosophy shall humble itself before the spirit of the cross. Those whom the incantations of the false prophet have thrown into so deep a slumber, shall arise and seek the way to Zion; and the war-hoop of the savage, the signal of death and devastation, shall give place to the cry, 'Salvation to the Lamb.'

Contemplate the posture of these worshippers. They stood before the throne, and before the Lamb. Once they were afar off, but they were brought nigh by the blood of Jesus; and by the merits of that blood they were received to glory. There they appear, not in the attitude of suppliants, for they now have nought to ask; but they stand there as devoted servants, ready to execute every mandate which their Redeemer may issue. The expression points out their holy confidence. When the Apostle John saw the glory of Christ in Patmos, he fell at His feet as dead; but they stand before the throne, and before the Lamb. The throne is the seat of Majesty; but they know it to be a throne of grace. Jesus is glorified; but they know that He is still meek, and lowly, and gentle in heart.

Contemplate the attire of these worshippers. They are clothed in white robes. While on earth they were arrayed in the righteousness of Christ, but their sanctification was imperfect; now their characters are free from every spot, and their hearts from every corruption, and every grace shines in perfect

lustre. They wear, too, the garments of festivity and joy. These are garments that never wax old, and never can contract a stain. These robes cover not one sad heart.

They have palms in their hands. They have laid down the sword and the spear, and taken up these palms as emblems of their victory over sin and Satan, the world, and death. From the tree of life these palms were taken; and as they wave them, they cry, Let us twine them around Thy head, O Thou Captain of salvation; for it was Thou that didst tread down our enemies before us.

Contemplate their exercise. They cry with a loud voice. Here the dread of ridicule sometimes suppresses their grateful effusions, and the voice of praise is often choked by the workings of heart bitterness; but now their joy is full, and their gratitude finds no obstacle to impede its thanksgivings. Glorious as their condition is, no emotion of pride rises in their hearts. They feel, that to Divine grace they owe their all. They cry, Salvation to our God. We ascribe the glory of salvation to Him by whom its plan was devised, by whom the Saviour was sent, and by whom its blessings are bestowed. Salvation to the Lamb. We ascribe the glory of salvation to Him who lived and died in our nature, and rose and interceded for our happiness. Salvation to the Holy Ghost. We ascribe the glory of salvation to the Eternal Spirit, by whom it was applied, by whom our natures were regenerated, and our sorrows soothed, and our graces cherished, and our steps guided, and by whom we were prepared for death and for heaven.

But can we mingle our devotions with these worshippers? Oh how shall we sing the song of heaven in this strange land! Amidst such worship, will Jesus listen to our broken and feeble effusions of gratitude? These worshippers call on you to imbibe their spirit. The eyes of the Redeemer are on you, and His ears are open to your cry; and, contemplating Him dying on the cross, whom they behold shining on the throne, exclaim, 'My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit doth rejoice in God my Saviour.'

Listen, Christians, to those lessons of duty which this scene, to which I have directed your attention, suggests. Learn from it to cherish more warmly the spirit of Christian candour and liberality, and to manifest it in your prayers, your opinions, and your conduct. Thus will you honour the power of the Saviour's grace, and recommend His religion to others as a system of peace and good-will to men. The spirit of bigotry excites the disgust of many an ardent mind at the religion

whose name it assumes, and drives, by its repulsive frown, from the gates of Zion, those whom the benignant smile of Christian charity might have won. The spirit which directs its railings and its anathemas against all who think not according to its system, and walk not according to its rules, is the spirit which, in the excesses of its rancour, stretched its victims on the rack, and kindled its faggots round the stake.

Let your prayers and your efforts be directed to promote the diffusion of the religion of Christ. The success of the Gospel of our Lord swells the myriads that surround the throne. How high is the honour which God is conferring on this country, and on this age, in calling us to be the instruments of extending the triumphs of the Saviour! A sphere is opened, in which the contributions of the poorest may co-operate with the donations of the rich, for filling the whole earth with the glory of Jesus. Beneficence is one of the great lessons which are taught in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. And what beneficence? Is it the beneficence that confines itself merely to the temporal necessities of the poor around us? Is that the only, or the chief beneficence taught us by the death of Him who bore the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors? Is it not a beneficence which extends to all our fellow-creatures, and which labours to save them from the bondage of corruption, and from the pains of hell? The return of peace widens the sphere of zealous exertion. The angel who has been seen flying in the midst of heaven, amid the tempests of war, will advance with more brightness and rapidity in the serene sky of peace; even that angel who has the everlasting Gospel to publish to all nations of men that dwell upon the face of the earth. Shall the efforts which were made for disseminating the religion of Christ, amidst the perils, the burdens, and the exertions of war, be relaxed at the return of peace? Shall they not be maintained and extended? The sword is returning to its scabbard, and the warrior to his home, the banner is folded up, and the trumpet is laid aside; but the ensign of the Messiah is unfurled, and the joyful sound is waxing louder and louder. The missionary girds on his harness; and the Bible goes forth conquering and to conquer. And shall we rise from a scene where we have been contemplating the struggles and the consummation of the Saviour's grace, cold and careless in such a cause?

Labour to advance in goodness. Consider the pattern to which you are required to be conformed, even the excellence of Him who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens. Study the character of your Lord more carefully than ever, that you may be guided

and animated in the imitation of it. 'Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit yourselves like men, be strong.' These palms are not the reward of the sluggard, who hides his hand in his bosom; or of the coward, who skulks from the heat of the battle; but of the good soldier of Jesus Christ, who shows a zeal and a patience, a fidelity and a courage, becoming the cause in which he contends.

Ascribe to God the praise of all the attainments you make, and of all the comforts you enjoy at present: 'Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to Thy name be the glory, for Thy mercy and for Thy truth's sake.' The vigour of your bodies, and the soundness of your minds, are from Him who is the health of your countenance, and the Father of your spirits. Your domestic felicity, you owe to Him who is the God of your families. For the respect in which you are held by your neighbours, you are indebted to Him who hath given you favour in their sight. Your progress in religion is from the God of all grace. 'What hast thou that thou hast not received? and if thou hast received, why shouldest thou boast as if thou hadst not received it?'

Anticipate the time when you shall mingle with this triumphant multitude, and join your cry with theirs. And can you be unwilling to quit your sackcloth for such white robes, the songs of Zion for this anthem, and your friends on earth for such companions, nay, for the Saviour Himself in glory? Let your affections and your praises, your manners and your pursuits, rise above the present world; and may the Spirit of God and of glory rest upon you! Soon shall you find, that the loftiest ideas which you had formed of the assembly above, in its number, exercise, and felicity, were far below what they ought to have been; and looking back on the services of the sanctuary below, you will think that your most serious emotions scarce deserved the name of piety, and that your most ardent thanksgivings had almost no claim to be received as praise. 'Thy will, O God, be done on earth as it is done in heaven;' and let the Church below more nearly resemble the Church above. Amen.